

Algerian delegation begins visit

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation representing the Algerian National Transitional Council arrived in Amman Wednesday on a several-day visit during which it will meet with several officials. The talks will centre on issues of interest to Jordan and Algeria, Council Vice-chairman Hussein Haider said. Mr. Haider said he will brief the officials here on the latest developments in Algeria. "We hope to give the real picture of what is happening and the efforts exerted by President (Hamid) Zeroual to serve Algeria's stability and to consult the people through presidential, parliamentary and other elections," said Mr. Haider. He said ties between the Jordanian and Algerian parliaments were distinguished. The two sides are always seeking to enhance relations, he said. The delegation was received by First Deputy Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Hadi Al Majali, Assistant House Speaker Mohammad Al Huneidi and Algerian Ambassador to Jordan Hashmi Qaddouri.

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Switch to summer time on April 6/7

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will switch to energy-saving summer time as of Friday April 7, 1995, according to a communiqué issued Wednesday by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker. On Thursday April 6 midnight, clocks should be set one hour ahead, making the difference between Jordan local time and Greenwich Meantime three hours. The country will return to winter time as of Friday Sept. 15, the communiqué said.

Arabs want probe into Pan Am blast

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab states will Thursday ask the U.N. Security Council to hold a new investigation to clear Libya of the Lockerbie bombing, the secretary general of the Arab League said. A seven-member Arab League committee drew up a resolution Wednesday calling on the Security Council to undertake a fresh inquiry "in light of recently published documents," Esmat Abdul Meguid said.

Vandenbroucke quits

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Belgian Foreign Minister Frank Vandenbroucke resigned Wednesday after being implicated in a bribery scandal, official sources said. His decision to step down came after he admitted being aware of a secret bank account allegedly used by his Flemish Socialist Party to hoard cash generated by bribes.

Cairo police break up protest

CAIRO (AP) — Anti-riot police dispersed about 80 students who planned a march Wednesday from 'Ain Shams University to protest Israel's participation in the Cairo International Trade Fair, police said. Police fired tear-gas at the campus in Cairo, but no injuries or arrests were reported, police officials said. This is the first time Israel has taken part in the annual trade fair since 1986 when a leftist group called Egypt's Revolution killed an Israeli embassy employee and wounded three others at the exhibition.

2 U.S. soldiers injured in Israel

TEL AVIV (AP) — Two U.S. troops were injured in an exercise in southern Israel Tuesday and were evacuated to an Israeli hospital, a U.S. embassy spokesman said. The injured troops were U.S. Marines and were injured during a massive ground manoeuvre in the desert, said an Israeli official. The troops were practising in Israel as part of joint manoeuvres that began last week and involves about 7,500 U.S. troops including Sixth Fleet ships, U.S. aircraft and Israeli ground and air forces.

7 lawmakers in Sudan dismissed

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudan's military leader dismissed seven senior lawmakers Wednesday following a heated parliamentary debate in which the government was accused of embezzling \$1 million and selling off profitable state enterprises. Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir replaced the committee leaders with former ministers and politicians, said the Middle East News Agency. The senior lawmakers had been appointed by the government. The dismissals came after a debate Tuesday in which a lawmaker, Amin Banani, attacked the government's programme to privatise state-owned companies, one of the reforms demanded by the International Monetary Fund. Mr. Banani said some of the firms that were sold off had made profits. Others were offered in hard currency, but paid for in Sudanese pounds, hampering the government's ability to pay off a crunching foreign debt of about \$14 billion.

Arab support falls short of Egypt's strategy on NPT

CAIRO (Agencies) — Arab League foreign ministers on Wednesday backed a resolution urging a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, but rejected Egypt's strategy for pressuring Israel to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

After three hours of debate at the Arab League's 50th anniversary meeting, the ministers deleted language that would have forced a strong Arab stand against renewing the anti-nuclear pact unless Israel also signed it.

Egypt has said it would not support renewal of the 25-year-old treaty when it comes before the United Nations next month and has been lobbying other Arabs to join forces.

A draft of an Arab League resolution, which is to be adopted formally Thursday, said the league supports the NPT as "an essential foundation for world order."

It also said Israel's nuclear arsenal — believed to contain up to 200 warheads — "poses a threat to regional security and to the credibility of the NPT." But it did not tie Arab backing for the nuclear treaty to Israel's signature.

Diplomats said the stronger wording was apparently dropped after lobbying by oil-rich Gulf states, which have been under American pressure to be honest.

"We have to be honest

(Continued on page 7)

Palestinian police arrest more suspects after foiled bombing

Wednesday.

It was imposed after the red Volvo truck packed with explosives was stopped by chance in Beersheba, the largest town in southern Israel with 150,000 residents.

Israeli police detained a third suspect, an Israeli Arab.

The man came from the Bedouin settlement of Tel Sheva, where one of the two Palestinians already arrested for Monday's attempted bombing in southern Israel sought to hide from police in mosque.

One of the two Palestinians arrested Monday near Beersheba, Issam Farhat Rabba, was a known Hamas militant, Israeli police said.

Israel on Wednesday prevented dozens of Palestinians entering the country via Erez. Palestinians turned back at the crossing to delay entry to dozens of Israeli security forces over the last year.

Israel cites security concerns as the main reason for delaying a promised expansion of Palestinian self-rule beyond Gaza and Jericho to other parts of the West Bank.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has demanded that Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat do more to foil attacks by militants on Israelis.

Arafat has said it would not agree to expanding Palestinian self-rule to the West Bank until Mr. Arafat complied.

The two sides have set July 1 as a target date for negotiating an agreement on troop withdrawal and Palestinian elections.

In response to the aborted truck bombing, Mr. Rabin called off planned talks with the PLO on the release of Palestinian security prisoners held in Israeli jails.

Mr. Arafat reacted angrily

Syria, Israel take break in talks

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Mideast peace negotiators will hunker down here this weekend after three days of talks and will press on with more discussions next week, a diplomatic source said Wednesday.

Israeli Ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovich and his Syrian counterpart Walid Muallim met Monday and Tuesday to discuss security arrangements surrounding a withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Golan Heights.

There have been no breakthroughs in the talks, temporarily interrupted Tuesday evening when Mr. Rabinovich returned to Israel for a long-planned visit by Vice President Al Gore.

Neither ambassador spoke about the talks Wednesday and the State Department was also tight-lipped, saying "we don't want to focus on the talks, for a better chance of success."

Negotiations have yielded little progress in three years on the issue of an Israeli pull-out from the Golan.

Syria is demanding a total withdrawal while Israel proposes a limited pull-out and wants adequate security guarantees.

The resumption of negotiations in Washington after a three-month lag was made possible by Secretary of State Warren Christopher's last Mideast trip. He managed to get the main players to agree to discuss security arrangements.

Mr. Perry's tour has also taken him to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. He was due to travel on to Qatar, which he announced on Monday had granted the United States permission to base military equipment on its territory.

He met with Bahrain's emir, Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, and the crown prince and commander in chief of the Bahrain defence forces, Sheikh Hamad Ben Isa Al Khalifa.

Mr. Perry also visited the aircraft carrier USS Constellation, which has spent almost 12 weeks in the Gulf, and was briefed on the new Iranian capabilities in meetings with the top navy command.

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U.S. says Iran has deployed chemical weapons on coast

BAHRAYN (Agencies) — U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry on Wednesday accused Iran for the first time of deploying chemical weapons on its coast and of moving 8,000 troops to Gulf islands, in a threat to the world's oil lanes.

"We have seen most recently a very substantial buildup of military forces on the islands in the Straits of Hormuz," at the entrance to the oil-rich Gulf, Mr. Perry told journalists during a stopover in Bahrain.

"This involves almost 8,000 military personnel moved to those islands," he said during a Gulf tour aimed at consolidating the U.S. alliance with Arab oil states against both Iran and Iraq. He did not name the islands.

"Coastal, it involves anti-ship missiles, air-defence missiles, chemical weapons," Mr. Perry said.

"It is a deployment that is far beyond any reasonable defensive requirements that Iran has, and it can only be regarded, I believe, as a

potential threat to shipping in the area," he said.

To the extent that all of the countries in the Gulf area use the Straits of Hormuz, and they represent a vital economic life line to them, this represents a threat to them," he said.

One fifth of the world's oil passes through the Straits of Hormuz.

After U.S. reports earlier this month of Iranian missile deployment on islands in the southern Gulf, Tehran said it had every right to deploy troops and equipment in defense of its own territory.

Mr. Perry said the purpose of his Gulf tour was not to sell weapons, but to promote "joint cooperation, including access to bases, joint training, joint exercises."

U.S. military officials said that around 84 military exercises were scheduled in the region.

Mr. Perry travelled later to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where he held talks with its president, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan, on boosting bi-

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Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor are seen off upon their departure for Paris on Wednesday by Their Royal Highnesses Prince (Petra photo)

King, Queen in Paris to meet Mitterrand en route to U.S.

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein arrived in Paris on Wednesday en route to the United States and Canada. In Paris, the King was to meet with President Francois Mitterrand before flying on to Los Angeles, where he will accept an award for peace, and then to Washington, where he will hold talks with President Bill Clinton and senior administration officials.

The King is accompanied by Her Majesty Queen Noor, Their Royal Highnesses Prince Ali and Prince Hashem, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and military advisor Major General Hameed Al Fayez.

French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajot also accompanied the King to Paris, where the meeting with Mr. Mitterrand over lunch on Thursday was described as a largely courtesy visit before the president leaves office.

It is the first time the award is going to an Arab head of state and comes after Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty in October.

The King's talks with President Clinton are expected to

focus on Jordanian-American relations, the developments in the peace process and U.S. aid to Jordan.

In Amman on Tuesday, U.S. Vice-President Al Gore said Washington would fulfill its pledge to forgive Jordan's debts.

"We are committed to full debt forgiveness in 1995, and we will meet our commitment," Mr. Gore said in a speech at the Royal Cultural Centre. He reiterated the same at a press conference after talks with the King.

"Jordan has taken great risks for peace and the U.S. will demonstrate by its action that we are by the Jordanians' side," Mr. Gore said.

At the joint news conference, King Hussein said he was "fully satisfied" with Mr. Gore's pledge.

The King said Jordan expects more from Washington than the \$43 million in military and economic aid proposed by the administration.

"First of all because it was a commitment," the King said, "and secondly because of the leadership role of the U.S. in terms of addressing similar problems with many other friends throughout the region."

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Turkish troops detain villagers in Iraq as U.N. voices concern

ZAKHO, Iraq (Agencies) —

Turkish troops have detained villagers suspected of being Kurdish guerrillas in a huge operation against rebels in northern Iraq that is drawing rising international concern.

Witnesses said on Wednesday Turkish troops, on the third day of a mission involving 35,000 soldiers, had searched houses in Derkar township, northeast of Zakho, and detained some residents.

It was unclear how many people had been seized or their immediate fate. An earlier report by an Iraqi opposition group said hundreds of villagers were involved.

Colonel Dogu Silachioglu, spokesman for the Turkish general staff, denied any moves against civilians, dismissing reports as "terrorist propaganda."

The United Nations said it was worried about the fate of Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq as the massive Turkish assault continues.

Baghdad's government and official media have made no public comment on the Turkish incursion.

A Syrian paper said meanwhile Damascus was waiting for fresh Israeli ideas.

It said no real progress would be made if Israel did not approve full withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

"Syria is waiting for new Israeli ideas at the ambassadorial talks to push the peace process forward on the basis of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 425 and the land for peace principle," the government daily Al Thawra said.

(Continued on page 7)

Iraq demands Turkish pullout

BAGHDAD (AP) — The Foreign Ministry on Wednesday protested a Turkish military push into northern Iraq and demanded the immediate withdrawal of Turkish forces.

The official Iraqi News Agency quoted a ministry spokesman as saying in a statement issued in Baghdad that Turkish troops have advanced some 40 kilometres into Iraqi territory "on the pretext of pursuing elements who seek to disrupt the Turkish state's internal security."

The U.N. official said the Turkish raid also delayed arrival of relief convoys to Iraqi Kurds. Mr. Wahroo said more than 150 U.N. relief trucks were held up on the Turkish side of the border amid a 40-kilometre-long queue of vehicles.

In Zakho, a Turkish officer said his forces were ready to stay in northern Iraq for up to a year in order to defeat the PKK rebels holed up in the region's hills and mountains.

"It can be a month, a year. We'll stay here until we have defeated them," the officer told foreign journalists near this border town on condition his name not be used.

In Ankara, Foreign Minister Ferhat Ataman said Wednesday that Turkish troops would be pulled out when their mission is complete and goals reached, but gave no date.

"With today's fighting 207 PKK fighters have died. We only lost seven soldiers," the Turkish major said.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) governments, alarmed at the prospect of a new crisis in the Western alliance, struggled to cover up cracks over Turkey's military incursion into Iraq.

Refugees and villagers

are not to be touched, are not to be harassed," Mr. Wahroo said.

He said the U.N. feared

for the safety of about 4,500 refugees who were now

in Turkey.

Bridge is symbol that Iraq survives

By Eileen Alt Powell
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraqis are celebrating the latest symbol of their defiance, the reconstruction of a 336-metre bridge destroyed by allied bombers during the Gulf war.

Iraqi officials say they have no information about such oil shipments. And they say it is a struggle to meet the needs of Iraq's 18 million people.

"Outside the country, we're doing our best to convince the international community to put pressure on America to convince them to lift the sanctions," said Parliament Speaker Saadi Mehdi Saleh.

"Inside the country, we do our best to provide people with the things they need and to increase production," he said.

"The Americans, the dirty Americans, thought we couldn't do it because of the sanctions," Iraq's industry minister, Hassan Kamal Al Majid, said at a dedication ceremony Sunday.

But since the war Iraq has rebuilt bridges, refineries, government buildings and factories "even better than before," the minister said.

Schoolgirls waved flags and pom-poms and chanted President Saddam Hussein's name. Baghdadis flocked to the site, creating the new bridge's first traffic jam.

State television carried a 20-minute programme showing President Saddam saying prayers on the bridge.

While the sanctions cause food and medical shortages, the government manages to keep things going. Western diplomats in Baghdad say the country is surviving on its oil.

Although Iraq is permitted to export up to 70,000 barrels of oil a day to Jordan to buy necessities, the diplomats say much more is leaving the country — but at sharply discounted prices.

They estimate Iraqi traders may be moving more than 200,000 barrels daily — twice what U.S. officials previously estimated — through clandestine channels.

Increasingly Iraqi oil also is being trucked to Iran, a nation with which Iraq fought a war from 1980 to 1988, said the diplomats, who insisted on anonymity. Estimated oil earnings of between \$800 million and \$1 billion a year have

helped bolster Iraq's economy but come nowhere near the \$12 billion its oil was earning annually before the Gulf war.

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Supreme court start hearings on lawsuit against treaty

AMMAN (AP) — The Supreme Court on Wednesday began hearing an unprecedented lawsuit filed by two women against the government and Parliament charging that the peace treaty with Israel is unconstitutional and violates their rights.

Muhibba Haddadin and her mother Fadha, who are demanding the annulment of the treaty, also alleged that the Oct. 26 treaty violates Arab and Palestinian rights and will lead to ethnic and

religious wars in the region.

The two Christian women contend that the treaty, which ended a 46-year state of war between Jordan and Israel, undermines "Christian belief in the Holy Bible."

A government lawyer, Fuad Abu Zeina, declared during the one-hour court session that the lawsuit has no legal base.

He pointed out that the treaty was ratified by Parliament and was thus constitutional.

Mr. Abu Zeina also challenged the Supreme Court's jurisdiction to hear the case.

The lawsuit argues that the "treaty is unconstitutional because it concedes Arab land in Palestine, which is part of the Arab Nation ... and the people who signed the document are not authorized to concede Arab land."

Mrs. Haddadin, a lawyer, told the Associated Press in a telephone interview after the hearing that the treaty recognises the State of Israel and therefore it meant "conceding Arab land."

"This is a clear violation of Arab and Palestinian rights and overstepping of authority," she said.

The lawsuit contends that the peace accord distorts historical facts. Ms. Haddadin and her mother say that "Jews never had a nation in Palestine ever in history, and recognising such a right for them now contradicts and distorts history."

Afghan government troops dig in against Talibans

KABUL (Agencies) — Afghan government troops faced the Taliban militia in a tense stand-off south of Kabul on Wednesday and a Taliban commander said Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani had forfeited all trust.

The commander, Mullah Mohammad Rabbani (no relation), said government troops must return to their previous lines near the capital before any peace talks could take place.

Rabbani has broken every promise and commitment he has made to us in the past," the Taliban commander said. "If they give us back all the positions we occupied around Kabul, then we will know they are ready for negotiations."

A government offensive against the Taliban-held hills to the south and southwest of Kabul forced the Talibans to retreat about 15 kilometres further south at the weekend. A Defence Ministry

spokesman said the government troops had inflicted heavy losses on the Talibans.

Mullah Rabbani said his units had retreated intact because they wanted to prevent any harm to civilians living near their former headquarters at Charasyab, which they captured from opposition leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in February.

Mullah Rabbani said the Talibans accepted U.N. proposals for an interim administration to take over from the president, whose self-extended term expired on Dec. 28.

President Rabbani has stayed on, arguing there was no legitimate mechanism to which he could transfer power.

The United Nations had hoped to supervise a handover on Tuesday, the Afghan New Year's Day, but U.N. special envoy Mahmoud Mestiri said the interim authority was not ready.

The United Nations, now

hoping for a transfer of power next month, has appealed for a ceasefire to allow negotiations.

An Afghan government commander, gazing through Russian-made binoculars at Taliban positions a few kilometres away at Mohammmed Agha, said he had no immediate orders to launch a new offensive.

"We are in a defensive position," General Moin said. "We don't have any plans to attack them, but if they fire a single shot first, by the grace of God, we will drive them out of Logar Province."

Judging by the effort put into preparing the frontline against Taliban attack it would appear that the Rabbani forces do not want to lose.

No artillery fire was exchanged on the southern frontline and neither was there any civilian traffic passing from Mohammad Agha to Kabul.

Fighting was going on in or around the town of Dilaran in adjacent Nimroz province, the official said.

Turkish assault in Iraq raises Western concern

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's huge cross-border attack on separatist Kurdish guerrillas in northern Iraq has raised concerns abroad about the fate of refugees in the region.

The operation, involving up to 35,000 troops advancing 40 kilometres into Iraq, also provoked concerns about its legality, particularly in Europe, where Turkey aspires to closer economic and political ties.

President Suleyman Demirel said Turkey was "absolutely determined to eliminate this major provocation" of separatist Kurds, but said care was taken not to hurt civilians.

He spoke on Turkish television as reports flowed of Turkish planes pounding Kurdish rebel camps along a 300 kilometres front inside northern Iraq and ground forces advancing in pursuit of

guerrillas of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK).

Turkish troops, speaking from Iraq on Turkish television, vowed to stay until the PKK was destroyed: "We will not leave until they are finished. Wherever they go, we will chase them."

"The aim is to cause as much destruction as possible," said one military official back in Turkey, summing up the operation which started before dawn on Monday.

The United Nations said it would be a "very serious matter" if reports were verified from the Iraqi border town of Zakho that Turkish troops had rounded up Turkish Kurdish civilians and taken them across the border to Turkey. The U.N. refugee agency assists a total of 13,000 Turkish Kurds in northern Iraq.

The European Union said

the incursion broke international law, violating Iraq's territorial integrity.

But while the United States asked Ankara to keep the operation as limited as possible, it tacitly endorsed the move after assurances that civilians would be safeguarded.

"There is nothing that warrants foreign reaction," Mr. Demirel said. "The terrorists... cross the border to come and kill our people. It is impossible to tell us not to do anything in the face of this... this is also in line with international law."

Anatolian news agency quoted Prime Minister Tansu Ciller as saying she was sure no civilians had been killed.

An Iraqi opposition group, the Iraqi National Congress (INC), said in a statement that Turkish paratroopers had dropped on villages 25

kilometres northeast of Dohuk in the east of the region, controlled by Iraqi Kurds since the 1991 Gulf war.

But a tank advance towards the district of Shiranish, northeast of the Iraqi border town of Zakho, had met heavy resistance from Kurdish guerrillas, it said.

The INC also said troops carried out house-to-house searches.

Turkey's general staff spokesman Colonel Dogu Silahcioglu said in Diyarbakir, command centre for the operation, that at least 24 PKK members were killed.

Eight soldiers were also dead.

The colonel's casualty figure contrasted sharply with one of 200 PKK rebels being killed, with no Turkish casualties, given Tuesday by Defence Minister Golhan.

New Age mystics flock to Egypt's ancient pyramids

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's ancient pyramids have become a centre of pilgrimage for thousands of New Age mystics who flock from around the world to seek the "energy" of the spirits of the pharaohs.

The granite walls of the pyramids and temples echo to the sound of chanting as this new brand of tourists — mostly American and women — brave the threat of Islamic militant violence in the search for inspiration.

Eyes closed, hand-in-hand, around 20 Americans gathered in a circle in the heart of the 4,500-year-old great pyramid in the funeral chamber of Cheops.

"Breathe, concentrate your energy," barked a woman dressed in a huge

blue tee-shirt. "Ask our ancestors to help us."

One woman cried as she prayed. Another adopted the lotus position and started up her video camera.

When the group emerged from the long corridor out of the pyramid, their faces were flushed with pleasure.

"It was a marvellous experience, spiritual as well as cultural," said Jane Cotton, a 33-year-old woman from Chicago.

Although Iraq has repaired many of its oil wells and refineries, Oil Minister Safa Jawad Al Haboubi says it will take 14 months after sanctions are lifted to boost production back to the pre-war level of 3.5 million barrels a day.

in spiritual trips. "Every year we deal with 1,500 to 2,000 people. Fifteen years ago there were only 20 to 30."

He is already taking reservations for turn-of-the-century celebrations on Dec. 31, 1999.

The Great Pyramid, the only one of the seven wonders of the world still surviving, attracts its band of followers at sunrise.

Among them are the Rosicrucians, a California sect whose temple in San Jose is shaped like an Egyptian temple.

"The pyramids have a particular shape and were built according to the power of the spirit, they give certain vibrations," says the sect's representative in Egypt, Milad Zakhary.

Other groups such as "11/

11" and "Power Places" organise gatherings of three to four hundred people at suitable times. Some dress entirely in white or in a tarboosh, a cap like a fez.

Andrew, a young Briton who came to Egypt with several friends, brought him a "Star Gate," a tubular copper structure which is supposed to create a strong energy field.

Mystics must ask permission from the Egyptian antiquities office to visit the pyramids outside normal hours. They pay \$35 for a group of 15, and \$15 for each extra person.

There are at least four to five groups a month, each one with around 20 people. Most are Americans and women," said Mohammad Hemeida, a local inspector of anti-

quities.

Egyptians themselves are rarely interested, but on Friday one of them waited in vain for Solomon, son of the prophet David, for several hours on top of the 137-metre high Cheops pyramid.

The Imhotep association, named after the architect of the Djoser and Saqqara pyramids, sees itself as more scientific than the New Age sects and has been meeting regularly in Cairo for the last nine years.

"The pyramids represent an energy point and symbolise the way geometric forms can be used to create a vibrational power," said architect Ibrahim Karim, one of the group's leaders.

Antiquities chief Hawas tried to explain the attraction.

"The pyramids have something magical about them because nobody knows how they were built. Some think they are the work of extra-terrestrials."

He distinguishes between simple pyramid worshippers who he respects because "they have a dream," and the more dangerous fanatics such as an American who wanted to dig underneath the Great Pyramid to find documents he said would change the world.

Mr. Hawas himself is sceptical of repeated attempts to uncover the secrets of the pyramids.

"Some people sometimes say they hear Cheops talking to them at night. But it is only the rats making a noise," he said.

"I bought a stolen Subaru

before the Israelis left Gaza. The same model would have cost two or three times the price normally.

"But that was during the Israeli occupation when we thought anything we could do against them was right."

"Now the Palestinian police are here and our government is enforcing the law we have to respect it," he explained.

Mr. Abu Ramadan was the 54th person to register and now has the special plate for stolen cars — pink lettering on a white background. He is number 22,034 — police began the system at 22,000.

Now he is legal and has taken out insurance for the first time.

Previously only stolen cars driven by the police were insured on the strip.

The phenomenon has produced more than one bizarre incident.

A member of the Palestinian preventive security services, who asked to be identified only as Ibrahim, bought a hot car for \$3,000 in January.

It was stolen from him within a few weeks, but he traced it and found at the wheel of another member of the security service who had also bought it cheaply.

They finally went to their boss who formed a committee of senior officers who ruled in favour of the second man.

Unlike his more wily colleague, Ibrahim had noted down neither the plate nor engine numbers. "I just knew what it looked like," he admitted.

Locals say most new cars are suspect in Gaza, and the bigger they are the more likely they are to be stolen.

Not surprisingly there are few new car dealers on the strip, but plenty of people offering vehicles recently "imported" from Israel.

Canadian committee to probe Somalia incidents

OTTAWA (AP) — A civilian panel was established Tuesday to investigate the actions of Canadian soldiers during U.N. peacekeeping operations in Somalia two years ago.

Defence Minister David Collenette convened the panel under the national defence act.

The unprecedent inquiry will be conducted in public. Similar investigations in the past, including a military-dominated panel that looked at some aspects of the Somalia mission 18 months ago, were held in private.

During court martial over the last year

Home News

Prime minister sets up committee to tighten administrative control

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker Wednesday decided to set up a committee to follow up the implementation of recommendations and decisions by the Lower House of Parliament Finance Committee calling for tighter control and stricter financial measures by government departments.

The prime minister also issued a communiqué to government departments and ministers asking them to study the Lower House of Parliament's decision on Feb. 15 approving its finance committee's report and recommendations included in the report regarding the 1992-93 Audit Bureau's reports and take the suitable procedure to address financial and administrative violations.

The committee's report stressed there was a general weakness in the administration and performance of government departments and incompetence on the part of the employees.

The report referred to the ministry of finance's practice of extending loans to firms operating at a loss, noting that until the end of last year, such loans amounted to JD 120 million.

The report also pointed out that contractors carrying out government projects were slow in finishing them, and it recommended that thorough feasibility studies be made before the start of any project.



Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker

It also pointed to embezzlements and fraud with regard to public funds, as included in the Audit Bureau's reports, and recommended that the government take steps to safeguard such funds.

The report referred to violations of government regulations concerning the appointment of government employees and recommended that the Inspection and Control Bureau be given wider authorities to control the appointments procedure and recommended that the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) should come under the jurisdiction of the Audit Bureau since it is a public organisation.

The committee set up by the prime minister Wednesday will be headed by Minister of Administrative Development Mohieddin Toq and will include as members the president of the Inspection and Control Bureau, a representative of the Legislation and Opinion Bureau as well as the secretaries general of the ministries of Industry and Trade, Justice and Planning.

The committee will follow up the implementation of the Lower House's Finance Committee recommendations in cooperation with all the concerned ministries and government departments.

The prime minister's decision was taken in accordance with the government's commitments expressed before the House during the discussion of the Audit Bureau's 1992-93 reports.

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Japan on Wednesday signed an agreement with Jordan under which Tokyo would provide \$11 million in grant to the Kingdom to address the deficit in its balance of payments, a Japanese embassy statement said.

The statement said the Tokyo government would also offer another \$14 million in aid to Jordan's water and health sectors within a month.

The agreement, signed by Japanese Ambassador Yuji Ikeda and acting Planning Minister Samir Kawar on Wednesday, involved one billion yen (\$11 million) in what the statement described as unconditional non-project grant that could be used by Jordan to finance imports from any source.

The grant "aims at assisting the balance of payment of Jordan, and encouraging the efforts on the Jordanian side with regard to the structural adjustment programme worked out with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank."

That was a reference to an IMF-prescribed programme that Jordan launched in 1989 after approaching the world

body for help with its \$8.3 billion foreign debt.

The Kingdom strictly adhered to the programme and managed to bring down its debts to around \$5 billion at the end of 1994 after cancellation of some major contracts, debt buybacks and partial cancellation of debts from Western creditors.

About \$1.8 billion of the debts have been rescheduled to periods exceeding more than 30 years.

Jordan is seeking more debt relief from creditors, most of them grouped under the Paris Club of governments, after securing \$200 million in relief from the U.S., \$75 million from Britain, \$30 million from Germany, \$25 million from Switzerland and \$5 million from France.

The U.S. is in the process of extending another \$500 million debt write-off to Jordan.

France is also offering a debt-equity swap of \$100 million, which in effect would mean a cancellation of about \$30 million in the Kingdom's dues to Paris.

According to Ministry of Finance statistics, Japan holds JD 1.25 billion (\$1.81 billion) of the Kingdom's debts. About JD 165 million (about \$235 million) of this



Acting Minister of Planning Samir Kawar

and Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Yuji Ikeda, Wednesday sign a grant agreement (Petra photo)

amount have been rescheduled to zero budget deficit by the year 1998.

Japanese diplomats say Tokyo, a strong supporter of the Middle East peace process, is willing to make more funds available to the Kingdom as long as Amman continues to implement the IMF programme, which aims at

outright Japanese aid to Jordan since 1993.

"The Japanese government is also planning to extend additional \$14 million grants within a month" to help Jordan's water and health sectors, the embassy statement said.

Princess Basma stresses women's force of change

Princess Basma stresses women's force of change

NEW YORK (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma said there is a strong national and international force that believes in the importance of the role of women in leading humanity to a better future. This force, the Princess said, is capable of inducing change and directing societies towards reinforcing and activating this role.

Addressing the preparatory meeting for the World Conference on Women that will be held in Beijing, China in September, Princess Basma said the Beijing conference is of paramount importance and necessitates good preparations to produce fruitful results.

Princess Basma briefed the participants on Jordan's achievements in the field of women and the noticeable progress in women's status in the Kingdom, especially the appointment of a large number of women as members of municipal councils.

The Jordanian delegation to the conference will present a draft proposal that includes recommendations and suggestions to amend 27 articles of the international draft plan of action of the U.N. treaty



to eliminate all sorts of discrimination against women, combat illiteracy, allow women access to decision-making post.

The draft plan of action covers 11 subjects that deal with poverty and its influence on women, unequal access to education between genders and the impact of armed conflicts on women as well as the role of the media in promoting women's contributions to the society.

'Jordanian, Israeli tour operators settle tourist numbers problem'

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian and Israeli tour operators, hotels and Ministry of Tourism officials on Wednesday settled a problem that arose after a large number of Israeli tourists were turned back from the northern crossing into the Kingdom last week, Tourism Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib said.

Solving the problem also meant a better Israeli understanding of the procedures related to Israeli tourists visiting Jordan, and that the Israeli Travel Agents Association and tour operators now understand that there is no delay on the Jordanian side to issue entry permits to Israeli tourists, the minister told the Jordan Times.

The head of the Israeli Travel Agents Association visited Amman today (Wednesday) and held talks with Jordanian tour operators, hotel executives and Ministry of Tourism officials, Mr. Khatib said. "They reviewed the procedures related to the issuance of entry permits to Israeli and related issues."

Now they understand that there is no delay from the Jordanian side in issuing visas for Israeli tourists," said the minister. "What is needed is a little bit more of organisation, which means that all Israeli tourists coming to Jordan should not choose to come on a single day in the week," Thursday.

The problem arose when several hundred Israeli tourists thronged the northern crossing into Jordan last Thursday at the beginning of a Jewish holiday. Their number far exceeded the daily ceiling of 600 set by the Jordanian authorities and, as a result, many of them were turned away.

Under an arrangement between Jordan and Israel, 600 Israelis are allowed in across the northern bridge and 300 across the Wadi Araba crossing every day.

The numbers have been set in accordance with the level of facilities available in Jordan to cater to the needs of the tourists.

As a concession to Israeli tour operators and tourists following last week's incident, Jordan agreed to allow in a higher number on today (Thursday) as a

one-time measure, the minister said.

"There is no need for us to increase the number of Israeli tourists that we allow in every day," Mr. Khatib said, adding that less than 20,000 Israeli tourists came to Jordan since the beginning of the year.

"The figures speak for themselves," he said, noting that the average daily visitors numbered around 350. "There is still large room for tourists to come," the minister said, referring to the daily ceiling of 900.

The minister said on Sunday that the best way to avoid cloggings at the crossings was for Israelis to "spread their visits throughout the week rather than everybody converging on the crossings on Thursday."

Wednesday's meeting appeared to put to rest a "threat" issued by four Israeli tour operators and the Israeli Travel Agents Association after an "emergency" meeting on Monday that they would boycott Jordan as a tourism destination if their demand for "speedier" entry procedures was not met.

JEDCO studies prospect of trade centre set-up in Dubai

AMMAN (Petra) — Director General of the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation (JEDCO) Mohammad Halaqa Wednesday said the corporation is currently studying the prospect of opening a Jordanian trade centre in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to promote commercial ties and increase the volume of trade exchange between Jordan

and Arab Gulf countries. Dr. Halaqa, who visited the fifth International Spring Trade Fair currently held in Dubai, said JEDCO will also work on increasing Jordanian exports to neighbouring Asian countries after the emergence of Dubai as an important re-export centre.

He said Jordanian exports to the UAE in 1994 totalled \$45 million, accounting for 37 per cent of Jordan's total

exports to the Arab Gulf. He said Jordan's pavilion at the International Spring Trade Fair Dubai is witnessing an increasing turnout by business and traders in view of the good reputation of the Jordanian industries in terms of standards and specifications.

Dr. Halaqa, who returned from Dubai recently, said the Jordanian pavilion is the second largest at the fair.

Jordan marks International Water Day

available water resources and the increasing demand for water.

Dr. Irsheidat said this increase in demand was resulting from the rise in population and in the standards of living, noting that further rises were expected in view of the anticipated boom in the industrial and tourism sectors.

The ministry, he said, was about to face this demand by preparing plans, policies and projects which will strike a balance between the available sources and the expected rise in demand.

The minister noted that the consumption of water in Jordan

whether for domestic or agricultural purposes, was rationalised compared to international standards.

According to Dr. Irsheidat, the international water poverty line stands at 1,000 cubic metres (cm) per annum annually, while in Jordan the average consumption per annum stands at 255 cm.

He said the Kingdom's observance of International Water Day, which was declared by the United Nations' General Assembly, emphasises the Kingdom's seriousness in dealing with the problem of water through cooperation with international organisations.

WHAT'S GOING ON

ARABIC MUSIC FESTIVAL

- ★ An illustrated lecture entitled "The Music Map of Jordan" by Yusra Jawharieh Aratta at the Royal Cultural Centre, conference hall, on Thursday at 6:30 p.m.
- ★ Musical performance by "Irbid Arab Music Ensemble" with conductor Dr. Mohammad Galwaniyeh (24 vocalists and 16 instrumentalists) at the Royal Cultural Centre, conference hall, on Thursday at 8:00 p.m.
- ★ Musical performance by the orchestra and band of the National Music Conservatory, with conductor Mohammad Sidiqi, at the Royal Cultural Centre, conference hall, on Friday at 8:00 p.m.

FIELD TRIP

- ★ Field trip, organised by Friends of Archaeology (FoA) Society, to Deir Abu Said and Al Kurrah. Departure will be on Friday in private cars from FoA Center at 8:00 p.m.

FILM

- ★ Film entitled "Stand and Deliver" at the American Center on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition of art by Ahmad Al Babil and Mohammad Ali at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.
- ★ Exhibition of books dealing with Arab and Islamic subjects at Instituto Cervantes (the Spanish Cultural Centre).
- ★ Exhibition of abstract art by "Alia" 'Ammoura and oil paintings by Salman 'Abbas at Orfali Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of abstract art by Abeer Bawwab at the Royal Cultural Centre. Also displaying oil paintings by Munira Al Tumsiya.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by several artists entitled "Faces" at the Balqaa Art Gallery, Fuheis.
- ★ Exhibition of art by Ruda Shukairy at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition by Syrian artist Marwan Qassab Bashi at Darat Al Funun. Also showing a permanent exhibition of contemporary Arab artists.
- ★ Exhibition of women's abstract artists entitled "The World Through the Eyes of Women" at Baladna Art Gallery.

Private universities vs. government admission standards

By Ian Atalla
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — It has now been nine years since authorities first gave local investors the green light to jump into Jordan's higher education system, and the newly-fledged private universities that have rapidly sprung up as a result now hold over 12,000 students.

In that time, the government's policy of imposing its own minimum standards on student admissions at the private universities has grown into a testy issue between many educators, and a frequent subject of heated debate in local newspapers.

The government's policy is "one of the biggest things which hamper private universities' development here," maintains Ahmad Hourani, a founder and administrator at Amman Private University, who is one of its most vocal critics.

To his knowledge, he argued, "no other government in the world has set up such a system," which "denies the basic right of any student, no matter who he is, to choose for himself whether or not to pursue a higher education" without any outside intervention.

Equally vocal counter-opposition to Dr. Hourani and private university educators like him comes from public sector officials and educators who openly distrust the private universities, which are run by

very limited group, a hair over 5 per cent of the 31,760 students who passed the first round of Tawjih exams this year in the scientific and humanities streams, did so with scores under 60.

Final Tawjih results from the three previous years do not vary significantly from that mark.

In addition, any actual fire beneath the smoke of debate would appear to be further diminished by the generally agreed-upon perception of educators at both the public and private universities, that student who scores under 60 on the Tawjih has shown doubtful prospects for succeeding in a university setting anyway.

What appears to keep the issue heated, however, is not the actual statistics behind it, but the way it has neatly fallen between two differing camps — those like Dr. Adas who are skeptical that profit-oriented commercialism has a place in the Kingdom's universities, and those who believe the government is stunting the development of higher education in Jordan with rigid and overly-centralised control of its activities.

Valid points exist on both sides, suggested Suleiman Rihani, an assistant dean of graduate studies at the University of Jordan.

On the one hand, he said, "there is the aspect of freedom, of democracy — the right of students to choose for themselves." But on the other hand, "in this early stage of limited experience with private universities, there has to be some form of scrutinisation."

Whether the government's 60-mark was justified or not in its own right, argued one private university official, other policy loopholes made it an arbitrary measure nonetheless.

"People who can afford it can easily go study anywhere outside Jordan with a Tawjih score of under 60," said Amin Mahmoud, president of Zeituna University. "And then, when they come back, we give them accreditation."

In addition to that, he said, foreign students are routinely admitted into the Kingdom's colleges with marks under the required minimum set for their Jordanian counterparts.

"Either you make the minimum for everyone, or you don't make it at all," Dr. Mahmoud, a former minister of culture insisted.

"Why do you discriminate?" The issue is further complicated by a third concerned party — Jordan's numerous community colleges, which often serve as a second resort for students who do not meet the minimum Tawjih marks needed for four-year universities.

Many community college administrators, already

dealing with cash-strapped budgets by-and-large, openly worry that abolishing the 60-mark will noticeably crimp the size of their usually tiny student bodies.

Enrollments at their schools range roughly between 100 and 400 students.

When Al Dustour Arabic daily recently published the opinion of eight community college deans on the 60-mark issue, none of them gave support for abolishing it, six of them were openly against doing away with the mark, and four frankly stated that they feared its abolition would hurt the interests of their schools.

One idea that has often been floated as a means of solving this conflict of interest between community colleges and private universities is "bridging."

Currently, graduates from the two-year community colleges face only limited chances of continuing onwards to a full four-year bachelor's degree inside Jordan. Under existing regulations, said Dr. Mahmoud, the public universities only admit the top three students from each specialty at any community college, and the private universities take none.

"We are doing a study on the issue which should be completed soon," she said. "And rather than lowering the required minimum, the views of most of the experts we have talked to has been just the opposite. They support raising it instead."

World News

JORDAN TIMES, THURSDAY-FRIDAY, MARCH 23-24, 1995

Manila recalls ambassador; threatens to cut Singapore ties

MANILA (AFP) — Philippine President Fidel Ramos went on the offensive against Singapore Wednesday, recalling Manila's ambassador and threatening to cut off diplomatic ties over the hanging of a Filipina maid convicted of murder.

The execution in Singapore Friday of Flor Contemplacion, deemed by many Filipinos as "innocent" and hailed by Mr. Ramos as a "heroine," has inflamed nationwide anger here, leading to street protests, calls to boycott Singaporean firms and the burning of the Singapore flag.

Although Mr. Ramos and independent analysts said the rift will not affect theivity of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), where both are members, the issue threatens to strangle bilateral ties, formalised in 1966.

In the first of a series of moves Wednesday, Mr. Ramos downgraded the Philippines' mission by recalling Ambassador Alicia Ramos "definitely" and replacing her with a charge d'affaires. Mr. Ramos, whose appeals

for a stay of the sentence were rejected, warned in a news conference that if a special commission he had formed to investigate the case ruled that the maid was unjustly hanged, he would not hesitate to cut off diplomatic relations.

Singapore's Foreign Ministry expressed sadness at Mr. Ramos' move.

Mr. Ramos told a news conference: "I would like to emphasise that we value our relationship with other countries, yet if this inquiry produces evidence to show Contemplacion has indeed been the victim of injustice from another country, we stand ready to sever our relationship with that country."

The commission will begin hearings Thursday.

Ms. Contemplacion, a 42-year-old mother of four, was convicted for the killing of another Filipina maid and a Singaporean boy in 1991 but two witnesses who surfaced this month said they have evidence to prove otherwise.

After the hanging, Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong postponed indefinitely a scheduled official

visit here next month. Also Wednesday Mr. Ramos cancelled the scheduled March 29-31 visit to Singapore of armed forces chief General Arturo Enrile and indefinitely postponed Philippine-Singapore joint naval exercises scheduled in July.

He banned new deployments of Filipino maids to Singapore and ordered that a travel advisory would be issued to Filipinos bound for Singapore.

He placed on standby a military transport plane to repatriate some of the 60,200 Filipinos working in Singapore if, "for reasons of personal safety," they wanted to come home.

Mr. Ramos angrily rejected a diplomatic protest by Singapore over the burning of its flag during a rally in the town of Davao, reminding the city state in a veiled swipe that there was "freedom of expression" in the Philippines.

Singapore had demanded that the flag-burners be punished and future acts be prevented. Mr. Ramos said Singa-

pore's envoy to Manila was told late Tuesday "in no uncertain terms (of) the Philippine government's displeasure and dismay at the language" of the protest.

Ramos, however, assured the protection Singapore nationals and property in the Philippines and urged Singaporean authorities to "accord the same" to Filipinos in Singapore.

Singapore is the second largest investor from ASEAN to the Philippines, pouring in \$63.20 million in 1994. Filipinos workers there sent back \$91 million last year. ASEAN also comprise Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Singapore is also the sixth largest employer of Filipino workers worldwide.

Singapore said Wednesday that it was recalling its ambassador from the Philippines, hours after Manila ordered the downgrading of its embassy.

"The Singapore government is recalling its Ambassador in Manila Tan Seng Chee for consultations," a Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement said.

British minister, Ulster loyalists meet

BELFAST (AFP) — A British government minister met here Wednesday for the first time with loyalist parties linking to Ulster paramilitary groups in a move seen as a step forward in the Northern Ireland peace process.

Northern Ireland Minister Michael Ancram was the first minister to meet with either side in the current series of exploratory talks on Northern Ireland.

British Prime Minister John Major's office said he gave the go-ahead Wednesday for the discussions to take place at Stormont Castle after the government re-

ceived assurances that Protestant paramilitaries would move towards decommissioning their weapons.

Before the meeting, however, Billy Hutchinson, one of the participants, said he did not believe the loyalist paramilitaries were ready to hand over their guns.

"They are not sure if there is a commitment from the British and Irish governments, and also they are not sure about the framework document and where it's going," he said.

Republican sources meanwhile said Sinn Fein, political wing of the Irish Repub-

lican Army (IRA), had also responded "positively" to a proposed agenda for ministerial-level talks put forward by government officials.

But a Downing Street spokesman said Sinn Fein could not be invited to such talks until they had some concession on decommissioning.

Mitch McLaughlin, Sinn Fein's national chairman, welcomed the government's talks with the loyalists, saying, "We have consistently argued that an inclusive political process was a pre-requisite for agreement for political structures."

Crimen parliament sacks local premier

SIMFEROPOL, Ukraine (R) — Parliament in Ukraine's pro-Russian separatist Crimean peninsula dismissed the region's prime minister Wednesday after deputies accused him of being too sympathetic to authorities in Kiev.

The chamber, by a vote of 58 to 26, dismissed Anatoly Franchuk and also sacked a deputy prime minister responsible for the autonomous region's economy.

Mr. Franchuk, whose son

is married to Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma's daughter, was in hospital suffering from pneumonia. He was dismissed five days after Ukraine's parliament abolished the region's constitution and eliminated the post of Crimean president.

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The prime minister entered into a plot with those who act against our statehood and the tasks assigned to us by our voters," pro-Russian Deputy Alexander

Kruglov told the chamber.

Parliamentary Chairman Sergei Tsekov immediately proposed Anatoly Droboboy, Crimea's agriculture minister, to take over as prime minister.

Two-thirds of Crimea's 2.7 million residents are ethnic Russians and local leaders have appealed to Moscow to back them against Ukraine.

But Moscow has said

Crimea is an internal affair.

Polyakov returns after space marathon

ARKALYK, Kazakhstan (R) — Russian cosmonaut Valery Polyakov returned to Earth Wednesday after a record 438 days in space which may help man travel to Mars.

Polyakov, 52, and two other crew members of the orbiting space station Mir, looked pale and disoriented as they were helped from the confines of their module after touchdown on the snow-swept steppes of Kazakhstan.

But as colleagues, doctors and family milled around them they recovered their spirits. Polyakov raised a cup of tea in a toast to his Kazakh hosts and said: "I feel right."

Fellow crew member Yelena Kondakova, squeezing out of the module after Polyakov, was met by her cosmonaut husband, Valery Ryumin, who greeted her with a huge bunch of roses.

"Where's the champagne?" joked Kondakova, 37.

Polyakov, Kondakova and third crew member Alexander Volkorenko landed just after 0400 GMT aboard a Soyuz TM-20 craft about 45

kilometres northeast of Arkalyk in the former Soviet republic. The latter two spent a shorter time in space.

Kazakhstan, a vast territory partly in Europe and partly in Central Asia, is home to the Baikonur Cosmodrome which has been the launch site for Russian space shots since Soviet times. Russia now leases it from Kazakhstan.

The blackened module, borne in its last stages by an orange parachute, bumped down gently on the snowy steppes in an operation of sharp contrasts and colours that made it seem like the set of a science fiction film.

"Everything went okay but I will give my final 'okay' when they get into the plane and take off for Moscow. Then I can say everything went perfectly," said air force Colonel Yuri Shurov, one of the leaders of the space module recovery mission.

Polyakov, a doctor, broke the endurance record of one year in space on Jan. 9. But he stayed aboard Mir until a joint Russian-U.S. crew linked up and took over on

March 16.

Polyakov studied the effects of long-term weightlessness on the human body, using himself as a guinea pig. The data he has brought back will help scientists assess if humans could live permanently in space or fly to Mars and back.

European Space Agency and NASA scientists say long-term weightlessness causes calcium loss in bones which become brittle while the backbone gets longer. Legs shorten and muscles begin to waste through lack of use.

Meanwhile, Russia Wednesday launched a military satellite from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome in the north of the country, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

The launch was described as being "in the interests of the Russian Ministry of Defense," the agency said in a dispatch monitored here by the BBC.

The lift-off was witnessed by military and air attaches from nearly 50 countries, the agency said.

China moves to boost Jiang's status

BEIJING (R) — China showed off Wednesday a new poster which depicts Communist Party chief Jiang Zemin gazing respectfully at paramount leader Deng Xiaoping — the first sign of a cult to boost Mr. Deng's chosen heir.

"The paintings shows the close intimacy between the two men — Deng and Jiang the current leader," Nie Dawei, an editor at the state-owned Nationalities Publishing House, told Reuters.

The poster is a reproduction of a painting by artist Yan Peiliun of the Military Political Department in the eastern city of Nanjing, who completed the painting last August.

The state published 10,000

posters and 50,000 calendars of the painting and delivered them Tuesday to shops around Beijing, putting them on sale for 10 yuan (\$1.18) and 5.60 yuan (\$0.42) respectively.

Mr. Deng and the people, "should be gratified the people are prosperous, the country is strong, he is 90 years old and the great undertaking of construction has a successor," the artist wrote on the poster.

The artist called the painting "glad and at ease" — reminiscent of the word of the late Chairman Mao Tse-tung to his chosen successor, Mao said to Hu Guofeng: "With you in charge my heart is at ease."

The coloured Chinese brush painting shows a smiling Jiang, his hands clasped

and resting on his stomach while he gazes respectfully at Mr. Deng, also smiling, who stands in front of him gesturing and supported by a cane.

The poster is the first sign of a cult to boost the status of Mr. Jiang, who analysts say is not yet a strongman and many not hold onto power for long after the death of Mr. Deng.

"The party is trying to promote Jiang to the ranks of Mao and Deng," a political analyst said.

Jiang is not qualified to have his own poster so he has to rely on Deng and appear in the same poster as Deng, the analyst said.

The publishing house said it hopes to recover much of its 78,000 yuan (\$9,200) investment.

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The experts believe that studying the planets can provide insight into how the Earth's climate might adapt to changes, whether caused by nature or by man-made acid rain.

Mars is cooler — hitting highs of freezing at the equator and dropping 100 degrees (38 degrees C) or so overnight — but the dust storms have quieted down in the last 20 years.

Drawing on data from NASA's Hubble telescope, scientists Tuesday said they are seeing unexpectedly dramatic changes in the climates of Mars and Venus.

"The solar system is much more unpredictable than people had imagined," said Anne Kinney of the Space Telescope Science Institute, who took part in a NASA briefing in Washington Tues-

day.

Hubble shows that the Martian climate has changed considerably since the unmanned Viking spacecraft visited in the mid-1970s during intense dust storms.

"These two planets allow us almost to do experimental planetology," she said, adding that scientists were intrigued by why Mars, Earth and Venus had evolved so differently.

Understanding weather and the atmosphere is a prerequisite for future study of these planets.

Unmanned probes could crash and burn if scientists misguide the atmospheric friction spacecraft would encounter near Mars, and weather may determine whether humans can some-

day explore these galactic neighbours.

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Pret-A-Porter minus one word — to open in Germany

BERLIN (AP) — Karl Lagerfeld's battle with film director Robert Altman has ended on the cutting floor. Lagerfeld, angry over a scene in which he described as a copycat, sued last week to stop the German distribution of "Pret-A-Porter," Altman's whirly fashion world. The offending word has been removed from the German-dubbed film and the subtitled version will open Thursday in Hamburg and Berlin, according to distributors senator film. "Only one word has been changed. For legal reasons we can't say what the change was, because that would be the same as telling you, 'this is where the original said 'thief,'" said Barbara Schmidt, a spokeswoman for the distributor. Lagerfeld is also trying to get the text changed in the French version of the film.

Oscar nominee Hawthorne says he is gay

LONDON (R) — British actor Nigel Hawthorne, nominated for an Oscar as best actor of his role in the film "The Madness Of King George," has revealed publicly that he is homosexual, British newspapers reported Wednesday. Hawthorne, much-loved by the British public for his role as a scheming civil servant in the comedy television series "Yes, Minister," made the disclosure in an interview with a U.S. gay magazine, "The Advocate."

Hawthorne, 47, a pro football hall of famer who became an actor and TV sports commentator after quitting the game, is one of the most famous Americans ever to be charged with murder. He has pleaded innocent to the June 12 slayings of his ex-wife and her friend, Ronald Goldman.

In the transcripts released Tuesday of a closed session Monday, defence attorneys asked to question Mr. Vannatter about two searches of Simpson's home and whether either turned up a knife.

Earlier in the case, the judge sharply criticised Mr. Vannatter, stopping just short of calling the detective a liar. Judge Ito noted that the blood was never confirmed to be of human origin and that the trip to Chicago had been long planned. Still the judge upheld the warrant.

While allowing the defence to ask about the statements on the affidavit, Judge Ito did not allow the defence to tell jurors what he had written criticising Mr. Vannatter.

Prosecutor Marcia Clark had portrayed the misspellings as harmless errors and urged the judge not to waste court time on the subject.

Hawthorne, 47, told the magazine that he planned to take his 51-year-old partner, Trevor Bentham, to the Oscar ceremonies in Hollywood at the weekend. "I'm not somebody who sets himself up as an icon of sexual orientation. But my private life has never been a secret. I've never been a closet queen," he said. His relationship with writer Bentham started 15 years ago. "It's not a transitory thing. It's for life. We both know that and I think we're very privileged," he added.

Bentham told Britain's Today newspaper: "We're just a dear old married couple... it's still a question of Nigel and me coming out — we've never been in." He said the relationship was no secret in the arts world and in the small English village where they lived. Today said Hawthorne would "make history as the first openly gay best actor nominee."

Hindus demand ban on cow slaughter

NEW DELHI (AFP) — About 100 men and women marched on the Indian parliament here Tuesday demanding an immediate ban on the slaughter of cows, and animal revered by Hindus. The Hindu demonstrators led four cows as they began their protest from a historic monument in the city centre to the Parliament House nearby a kilometre away, shouting slogans against Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. Some 300 armed police and paramilitary troops stopped the marchers shortly after the protest began, blocking their way with ropes and steel barricades. No arrests were made. Baikunt Lal Sharma, an opposition Hindu MP who led the demonstration, demanded a ban on cow slaughter in India, where Hindus, who consider the animal holy, constitute more than 80 per cent of the 900 million population. "There should be an immediate legislation outlawing cow slaughter," Mr. Sharma said. "We wanted to gift these (four) cows to the prime minister, but we cannot because we have been stopped here," he added.

Royal conserves for lonely Norwegian diners

OSLO (AFP) — Britain's Prince Charles and Princess Diana have become role models for people who dine alone, to believe a Norwegian advertising agency devised a month-long campaign for a new line of ready-made foods, including a pasta meal, a beef stew and a ragout. Posters show pictures of either Charles or Diana with the slogan "Dinner For One." "We were looking for people who symbolise the reality of eating alone," managing director Terje Oeveras told AFP. Princess Diana is said to eat alone often since the royal couple separated in December 1992.

Chechen fighters 'execute' Russian pilot

Russian troops seal off Argun

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russia said Wednesday that its forces had sealed off the town of Argun, key stronghold of Chechen fighters 25 kilometres from Grozny.

"Russian troops have completed their operation to block illegal armed formations in the region of Argun," said a statement from the Russian government press service carried by RIA news agency.

Chechen fighters had been forced out of Argun shortly after midnight, the statement said.

The government press service said Tuesday that Russian troops had crossed the River Argun, captured an important hill and taken a road and railway leading to the city.

Russia sent tanks and troops into breakaway Chechnya on Dec. 11 to crush a three-year-old independence bid.

Troops have been positioning themselves to take Argun since they seized Grozny in February after weeks of heavy fighting which left the Chechen capital destroyed. Many parts of Argun have also been destroyed by Russian bombardment.

Russian warplanes, helicopters and rockets pounded the rebel Chechen "capital" of Shali Wednesday after ground forces pushed to encircle the town.

At about 3:30 p.m. (1230 GMT) Sukhoi-25 fighter bombers began attacking Shali and to the east, south-east and south in an arc of about eight kilometres (five miles) from the town.

The planes could be seen continuously circling high in a clear sky, then diving and firing a pair of rockets.

After overnight advances, the Russian ground forces

were in positions just west and north of Shali, the de facto capital for fighters loyal to separatist President Dzhokhar Dudayev.

During the day, tanks and heavy guns pushed south as far as the outskirts of Germenchuk, about two kilometres to the north of Shali, said Musa Ayugov, a 32-year-old soldier at a Shali post.

Three helicopters could be seen firing rockets at Chechen positions to the northeast of Shali.

The thrust on the ground has also cut the main road from Shali to Argun to the north.

In the morning, Shali was hit by a barrage of rockets that slammed into the town centre, hitting a busy street, a bridge and a row of houses opposite the military headquarters.

Residents said at least four people had been wounded, although accurate figures were unavailable. The attack caused panic, speeding the exodus of refugees from the almost deserted town.

A burning oil installation near Shali sent off a huge cloud of black smoke and more smoke poured from near Kurchalo, to the east of Shali.

Russian tanks and infantry control escape routes from Shali to the west and north, while Russian planes and helicopters regularly bomb and strafe roads to the east and south.

The centre of Shali itself was rocketed mid-morning, as refugees crammed their belongings into lorries and joined the exodus towards the mountains in the south.

The strikes created a hellish scene off fireballs and a storm of shrapnel, black smoke and dust. Debris flew

in high arcs over the road. Panicked civilians fell over trying to run, a boy dropped his bicycle just before it was smashed by an escaping car.

The Russians took Mesker Yurt during nightlong artillery bombardments, said Hadjajev Abuyev, at the rebel headquarters in Shali.

The fall of Mesker Yurt to the Russians was also reported by refugees fleeing east.

The deputy commander of Chechen forces in the Shali area, Said-Hassan Tatayev, admitted his men were in a corner, but said the guerrilla force would fight street by street before letting Shali fall.

"Let them come here. I want to welcome them. We'll be hiding in every hole," he said.

But rather than storm Shali, the Russians will likely encircle and raze the town to the ground with artillery and air power, as they did to the capital Grozny earlier this year and are trying to do to Argun," Mr. Tatayev said.

"It's easier for me to fight here than in the open, but they probably won't come in. It will be just like Argun," he said.

Chechen independence fighters in Shali looked battle weary, after three months of fighting the giant Russian Armed Forces, whose total ranks outnumber the entire Chechen population.

But there was no talk of surrender here in Shali.

Chechen Grad rocket and artillery batteries on the outskirts of Shali fired constantly overnight and again early Wednesday morning.

A truckload of fighters armed with anti-tank grenades and rifles set off for the front chanting "Allahu Akbar" or "God is Great."

For the civilians, the new



Russian Orthodox priest Father Kipriyan holds his Kalashnikov gun in one hand and an Orthodox cross in the other while standing at a mass grave filled with civilian victims who died in battles for Grozny at the Russian cemetery in

dred metres away.

Like the Dudayev guerrillas, the refugees' only option will soon be to hide in the Caucasus Mountains.

Meanwhile, bombed from the air, pounded by Russian artillery and forsaken by its inhabitants, Argun is now little more than a ghost town — but Chechen fighters are fighting to the death to hang onto it.

In what remains of the centre, a shell slammed into a gutted dwelling early in the day, killing two of the eight Chechen fighters who had spent the night in the cellar.

The rebels live beneath the ruins of the town, scurrying back to their underground shelters at sundown after a day on the front several hundred metres away.

But their ranks have been devastated by Russian round-the-clock shelling and air strikes, against which the rebels have few heavy weapons.

The hardest part is not going to the front," said Ramzan Issaev, a Chechen commander here, "but having to return to their families the bodies of our comrades killed by the bombs."

If Argun has held out to date it is not only because of the courage and determination of its defenders. The town has also been able to maintain critical links to rear bases, such as Gudermes and Shali, that have fed reinforcements and supplies.

"It's the duty of every Chechen to help our fighters," asserted 55-year-old Kamzat Irdiev at the wheel of a rattle-trap old truck that had just raced through Russian artillery fire on the road from Shali with a cargo of supplies.

On Tuesday as the town was rocked by explosions, the head of an elite Chechen unit, Shamyl Basayev, acknowledged he was "not sure we can continue to hold Argun."

Several hours later Russian troops, after capturing the road running east to Gudermes and claiming to have seized a village to the south, thus encircling Argun.

Surrounded, Argun would lose its strategic significance as a crossroads between

Gudermes and Shali, two key Chechen cities still held by the rebels.

Vowed 28-year-old Issa,

who was born in Argun: "I'll die here if I have to. As long as I live they'll never enter this town."

Chechen forces claimed to

have executed a Russian Air Force pilot Tuesday for carrying out bombing raids on the breakaway republic, the Interfax News Agency said.

In Moscow, the Russian Security Council, the country's main security body, is to meet Thursday to discuss the "restoration of Chechnya's economic and social infrastructure," the Interfax News Agency reported.

The council, headed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin, last met on March 6 to discuss the fight against crime, following the assassination of top television journalist Vladislav Listyev.

Japan police find 34 bottles of sarin solvent in raid on sect buildings

TOKYO (R) — Japanese police Wednesday discovered bottles of a solvent linked to the nerve gas attack on Tokyo subways when they raided facilities owned by the secretive religious sect Aum Shinrikyo.

In the massive raid, police said they confiscated 34 containers of the solvent acetone-nitrile, the same chemical detected in Tokyo subway cars after Monday's attacks, along with residues of the nerve gas sarin.

As police entered the cult's buildings, sect followers screamed in protest. About 50 followers were taken to hospital in a "comatose state" and suffering from acute malnutrition, apparently after fasting.

The cult's leader was reported to have told followers this week the time had come to help him, that "it was time to carry out the salvation plan and to greet death without regrets."

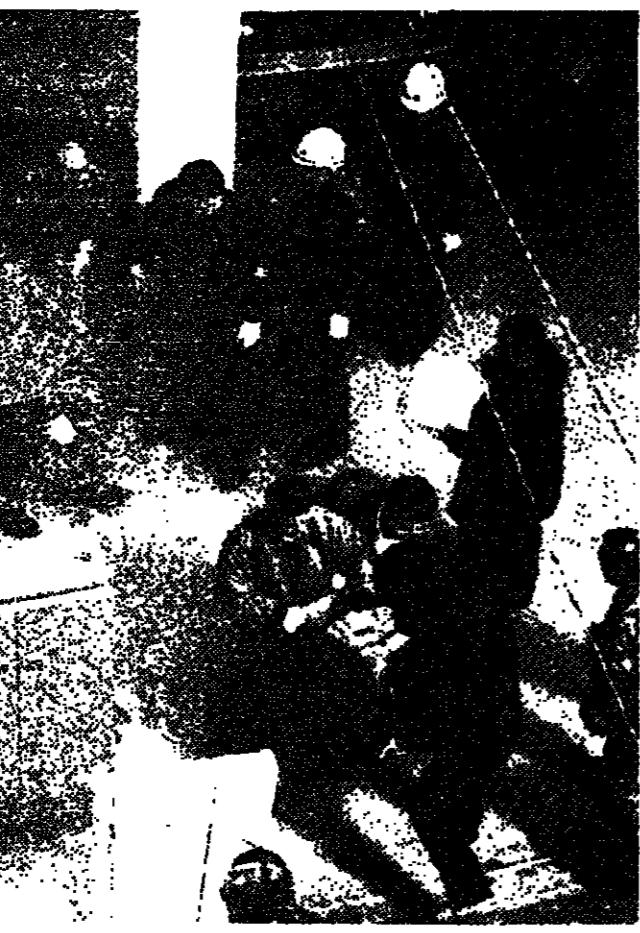
The raid stemmed from an abduction charge and officials were not officially linking the sect to the nerve gas attacks which killed 10 people.

"Today's raid was about the abduction, so it was separate from the sarin case," said Kozo Igashiki, chief cabinet secretary. "But when investigating we, of course, think of various possibilities."

About 2,500 officers raided 25 building complexes of the sect in Tokyo and in the small village of Kamikura-Ishikawa near its Fujimomiya Headquarters at the foot of Mount Fuji, 100 kilometres west of Tokyo.

In a rare move, they were accompanied by the army's anti-chemical warfare unit. Many wore gas masks and others carried caged canaries, apparently to detect gas.

Chemical experts said unidentified suspects in the sub-



Policemen carry out seized plastic tanks from a Tokyo subway station. Some 3,000 policemen raided its headquarters and 25 locations around Tokyo two days after the deadly nerve gas attack on Tokyo's subway system (AFP photo)

way case could have used acetone-nitrile, also known as methyl cyanide, to dilute sarin, which was developed by German scientists before World War II. A droplet of sarin can kill instantly.

The simultaneous attack on five subway trains during the rush hour killed 10 people. More than 5,500 passengers and subway officials were treated in hospital, and 70 people are still listed in critical condition.

Media suspicion fell on the sect because of an incident

Dole warns Clinton on Russia visit

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. Senate majority leader Robert Dole told President Bill Clinton he must press Russian President Boris Yeltsin to end the bloodshed in Chechnya during his May 9 visit to Moscow.

"Now that he has made the decision to go ... Mr. Clinton must use the opportunity of his visit to address in detail ... strong U.S. objections to the brutal violence against Russian citizens in Chechnya," he said in a statement.

Republicans have criticised Clinton's decision to attend Russian celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the allied victory in Europe, charging that it is inappropriate in light of the fighting in Chechnya.

Mr. Clinton aides struggled with the decision on whether to accept the Russian invitation and stressed the U.S. president did not want to be at the centre of lavish military festivities as Russian troops battle Chechen separatists.

Gen. Dole stressed Mr. Clinton should attend V-E celebrations in London, Paris and Berlin.

"While there is no doubt the Russian people were crucial partners in the Allied war effort, we must recognise it was the British and French who fought Nazi Germany from the beginning, and it is the Federal Republic of Germany which has become the model for democracy in post-cold war era," he said.

Gen. Dole, who has announced plans to run for the Republican presidential nomination, said Mr. Clinton must also tell the Russian leadership that Congress plans to make U.S. aid to Moscow conditional on the Kremlin's policy decisions.

"The president must deliver the message that the Russian government's support in the United States Congress is decreasing and that its action will determine the level of U.S. assistance it receives," Gen. Dole said.

Mr. Clinton must also express U.S. displeasure with Russian support for the rogue regimes in Iraq, Iran, Serbia and Cuba," Gen. Dole said.

Russia has angered the United States over its recent decision to sell a nuclear reactor to Iran, to keep a spy station open in Cuba and to support Iraq and Serbia in their drive to convince the United Nations to lift sanctions against them.

Bosnian combatants guarantee airlift safety

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Bosnian government and Serb forces have promised not to target U.N. flights into Sarajevo, opening the way for a resumption of the humanitarian airlift into the city, U.N. officials said Wednesday.

U.N. spokesman Alexander Ivankovic said U.N. officials Tuesday and Wednesday gave verbal assurances U.N. flight will not be targeted.

He added: "We hope this will satisfy the (aircraft) operators and the information we have from (U.N. Headquarters in) Zagreb is flights may resume as early as this afternoon although it is more likely they will start tomorrow."

Five planes were attacked by Serb soldiers while landing at Sarajevo Airport over the space of nine days. Four were holed by heavy machine-gun fire and one was nearly hit by a 120mm mortar bomb.

The humanitarian airlift, on which Sarajevo residents depend for much of their food and medicine, was suspended on March 11 as a result of the attacks.

Some U.N. administrative flights, operated by private contractors and ferrying peacekeepers and U.N. civilian workers, continued but they too came under increasing attack.

Relief flights are operated out of Ancona, Italy by five Western nations who shuttle military transport planes back and forth across the Adriatic.

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The Korean peninsula... still remains the last battlefield of the cold war. This is because North Korea is still adhering to the confrontation policy of the cold war era, rebuffing our earnest endeavours to improve relations," he said.

Restarting the airlift — which passed its 1,000 day of operation late last year — will come as good news to 11 Sarajevo in urgent need of medical care abroad, all of whom are dependent on U.N. planes for transportation.

Among the critically ill is 30-months-old Admira Alibasic, who is suffering from leukemia.

Doctors say the girl desperately needs treatment already arranged in Germany and will be sent out on the first available flight.

Meanwhile Serb and government forces battled in northeast Bosnia Wednesday and U.N. officials protested the hijacking by suspected Serbs of two more U.N. vehicles near here in an escalation of incidents which has prompted a new international push to save Bosnia's unravelling ceasefire.

Mr. Ivankovic warned that if the fighting which erupted Monday around the U.N. "safe area" of Tuzla worsens further, "the situation could be catastrophic."

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Artillery, rocket and machinegun fire was reported overnight and Wednesday morning in the Majevica Hills area east of Tuzla and near Kalesija, in the northeast. U.N. spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Coward said.

Mr. Ivankovic said the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was lodging protests with both parties over the violations of the four-month

cessation of hostilities agreement concluded by the two parties at the start of the year.

UNPROFOR has suggested the Serbs are bent on escalating tension with blue helmets on the ground.

Meanwhile in Paris, Foreign Minister Alain Juppe met U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher Wednesday and the two agreed on the need for renewed efforts by the five-nation "contact group" to save the ceasefire in Bosnia and breathe life back into the peace process.

The contact group comprises Britain, France, Germany, the United States and Russia.

In an opinion column published Wednesday in the French daily *Liberation*, Mr. Juppe warned that: "War is on the point of erupting again in Bosnia."

"The ceasefire which in principle ends next month is already seriously breached by all sides. Once again it feels we are just waiting for arms."

Mr. Christopher headed Wednesday to Geneva where Bosnia was expected to figure in talks with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.

More than 1,400 shells fell in northeast Bosnia Tuesday and artillery exchanges continued throughout the night in the Majevica Hills and Kalesija area around the town, Col. Coward said.

The Bosnian army was believed to have captured some ground north of Tuzla, he added.

20 injured in mystery S. Korean gas leak

SEOUL (R) — About 20 people were taken to hospital in the South Korean capital Wednesday after being overcome by mystery gas fumes, police said.

A Seoul police spokesman said gas leaked through several floors of a 19-storey building in southern Seoul, which houses the office of American Insurance Company.

"We are investigating the incident in cooperation with a military anti-chemical team," he said without giving further

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A

Abbadis join hands to enhance capital's cultural life

By Mohammad Masharqa

Mamdouh Abbadi and Mohammad Abbadi both belong to the Abbadi bedouin tribe of central Jordan. But despite their bedouin heritage both are providing a great deal to Amman's urban life. The first, a dentist by profession and the mayor of the capital, and the second, a film director, are cooperating to bring the First International Theatre Festival to Amman.

The festival, the Amman Theatre Days, will feature theatre groups and experts from Europe, Russia, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine and Morocco and will include the holding of the workshops and lectures.

For Jordanian artists, who participated many times in other festivals on the international level, this is a dream come true. Everyone had believed that Amman was financially incapable of undertaking such a feat. The strongest obstacle had always been

the lack a modern management that is both cultural and democratic.

Now the two Abbadis are collaborating to realise the dream. The mayor, Mamdouh is providing the logistics and the funds; and the other, Mohammad, a former president of the Artists Association, is heading the festival's higher committee.

AMMAN CULTURAL PULSE

The idea is the brainchild of Nader Omran, the leader of Al Fawanees Theatre Group. Omran, an accomplished scenographer, and Khalid Tarifi, a leading play producer and actor, for years at odds with each other, are going to cooperate to ensure the success of the festival.

Mohammad Abbadi says he wants to involve many sectors of the society including the army, the Public Security Department, the press and the private sector

in different ways to ensure the success of the festival.

"We want to give the next generation of artists the solid basis to continue building on a modern, creative theatre which can represent Jordan internationally."

Mr. Abbadi said he hoped that the festival would help to promote Amman as a leading city for the arts.

"We have to open Amman to pluralism, modernism and high quality art to pass the message to other Arab capitals that we breed courageous and genuine experiences in art. Our belief is that freedom of expression and open mind creates great art."

The financial and moral support extended by the Amman Municipality is a show of determination that Mayor Abbadi wants to transform a traditional institution into a modern one. "We hope that our example will be spread onto other municipalities throughout the Kingdom," Mamdouh Abbadi said.

It is worth noting that the municipality has been publishing a cultural magazine, Amman, for the last year, which includes the works of talented writers.

Mr. Abbadi, the organiser, wants to include the private sector because, he says, there is mutual interest between cultural production and the commercial sector.

"It is the Jordanian artists' duty to produce high quality art that would generate more trust and better basis for effective cooperation between the two parties," he explained.

The Amman Theatre Days will introduce five local plays, five Arab and five European plays.

It is hoped that unlike the Third Jordanian Theatre Festival, which had a rigid and conservative management, art lovers hope that the management of the international festival will be different.

The Amman Theatre Days start next week. It will be an opportunity to test the intellectual and artistic abilities of Jordanians versus those of other Arab and international artists. It will also be an opportunity for the Jordanian audience to enjoy a variety of artwork and take a short leave from the political and economic pressures they have been going through.

SOCIETY ON THE MOVE

Of preservation, innovation and creation — and some all-American fun

Dutch artist Gerti Bierenbroodspot leaves Jordan temporarily today after an extended stay, her second since 1990, in which she submerged herself in the heart and soul of Petra. No stranger to this ancient place, which she describes as "stepping into metaphors of archaeology, architecture and mythology," Bierenbroodspot said of her recent stay that the changes she witnessed in Petra were worrisome. She points to the towering concrete buildings of new hotels, saying "I never thought there would be so much development taking so much away from the beautiful expansive views in Petra." The growing number of vendors inside the site was a shock to her. Concerned with the fragility, not only of the sandstone but of Petra's nature, Bierenbroodspot, who is an active member of the Petra National Trust (PNT), has worked with archaeologists of the Department of Antiquities to help save "a recent discovery of a whole Nabataean village in Brag." Her contribution was to draw exact depictions of the site to help strengthen the archaeologists' case to save such discoveries. She recognises that development is inevitable, but Bierenbroodspot sees hope in all concerned authorities and institutions working jointly to preserve Petra. In fact, she planned to propose to the Ministry of Tourism that the unsightly concrete facades of the hotels above the city be painted in a "camouflage" that would blend in with the natural colour of the rock formations. "It's a simple paint formula that I can mix for them," says Bierenbroodspot. Her personal attachment to Petra is bringing her back to her own Holland where she will work to hold a benefit exhibition there to raise money for the PNT. She envisages that such funds could be used, for example, to train the indigenous tribe of Beduins to become rangers. Naturally her own work in Petra these last few months will keep her busy in canvases and a book. But it was when Bierenbroodspot talked of her vision of producing an opera about Nabataean heroine that one could grasp the power of Petra's "charisma." Such an undertaking would require at least two years, and Bierenbroodspot looks at it as a once-in-a-lifetime event because she would only seek to have a one, maximum two-night, performance in Petra. Bierenbroodspot has her eye on American opera star Jesse Norman to play the leading role. Meanwhile, there is much work to be done, but



Gerti Bierenbroodspot

Bierenbroodspot will return again in the early summer and take up residence in her new-found home in Petra where she intends to continue her various vocations.

IN THE RANGE FOR A ROVER: Just as the new class of French Renault and Citroen executive cars were making their debut on the streets of the Kingdom, in comes Britain's Rover series. At a reception which opened to the fanfare trumpets of the British military band, The Green Jackets, Rover distributor Jordan Automobile Company General Manager Nihad Zacharia and advertising agents Promoseven unveiled the model cars to 400 guests who for a moment were breathless. Was it the car, the display or the moment of surprise, we may never know, but a good time was had by all. Just getting over the whirlwind attached to a visit to Jordan by his Prime Minister and a high-powered delegation of U.K. businessmen, the ever-enthusiastic British Ambassador, Peter

Hinchcliff was right there doing a pitch for British products. The event was inaugurated by Ministry of Industry and Trade Mohammad Smadi who deputised for His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah. Eyeing the new sleek line of Rover cars were Honorary Consul of the Netherlands Raouf Abu Jaber, Romero Restaurant Proprietor Zeid Ksous, Architect Jaffar Toukan, his son, attorney Ibrahim Toukan, Ideal Systems/Apple Computer proprietor Karim Kawar, several shipping agents, Rotarians and other invited guests. If the good mood of the evening is to be translated into a prediction of sales, then those classic navy and grey Renault Sabrane and Citroen Xantia's will have to make room for some flash red Rover 820S's. By the way, the colour range of the Rover line this year just happens to be the colours of the Jordanian flag. That could not really be coincidence, could it?

AMERICANS HIT THE BEACH: The American Center, in cooperation with the Aqaba Gulf Hotel, began the "first-ever" America Week in Aqaba yesterday with a reception and musical concert by Billy and Toni Stevens, who have performed in Jordan previously. On the programme for the rest of the week are musical performances, exhibits and an authentic American food festival. "American Week in Aqaba is an important opportunity to bring audiences outside of Amman some of our best artistic and information programmes," says Peter Kovach, counselor for Press and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Information Service of the embassy. The line up of events also includes a photography exhibit titled, "Young America," a poster show on American Jazz, video programmes and an international telephone dialogue on tourism and investment. The Aqaba Gulf Hotel will offer a selection of American favourites such as hamburgers and hotdogs along with several prizes and fun family activities throughout the week, according to Food and Beverage Manager Khalid Abu Ghoush who will have his hands full seeing to it that "rare" means rare.



OMAR IN THE NEWSROOM: The Jordan Times proudly announces the birth of Omar Hassan Khalil Wahbeh (3.7 kilos), first-born son of JT Staff Reporter Ica Wahbeh and her husband, Hassan Khalil Wahbeh. The JT newsroom was filled with jubilation at the news of the on-target arrival, predicted by Dr. Zeid Kilani, on March 21, the first of Spring and Mother's Day of little Omar. But when our freelance reporter/photographer Rana Husseini stormed in with the first photos of the happy Wahbeh family the excitement started all over again. What needs to be said here is that for the nine months everyone waited, a "name the baby competition" pitted JT editors, reporters, freelancers and proof-readers against each other, not to mention the camps outside the newspaper. But the secret to the Ica and Hassan formula brought about a beautiful compromise, and now we have Omar.

Jennifer Hamarneh

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

TIME FOR FUN

* Arrested in 1690 on a political offence John Bernardini was kept in Newgate Prison without trial for 46 years. During his imprisonment he married and fathered 10 children.

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

— Live up to what's expected of you by hard work and honesty.

Haq'iq al-ma'mool minka bel-i'ttihad wal-i'stiqama.

— You got an excellent grade in your diploma. Why didn't you go on and finish your education?

Laqad hasalta ala darajet mumtaz fil-bakaluria.

— It's circumstances, Your Excellency. Life can be summed up in two words: Hello and Goodbye.

Innahaz-zuroof ya sahibas-saada. Al-hayat yomken tal'kheessha bekaifimatyn: Istiqbal wa tawdi'.

— Put your trust in God and start your study just now.

Tawakkal salal-Lah wab'da fee dersatik minhal-an.

— I'll do it as soon as possible, madam.

Sa'afalu zalik fee akrab waqtan momken ya sayyedati.

— Make effort to gain the confidence and friendship of your seniors.

Eemal ala kash thiqa al-ru'asaa wa-sadaqatihim.

— May God guide your steps towards success and happiness.

La'allah ya'waffiqoq wa-tuhqaq an-najah was-saada.

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. A morganatic marriage describes what kind of union?

2. Brooklyn and Staten Islands are connected by the longest and heaviest single span suspension bridge in the world. What is it called?

3. Where was Interpol founded?

4. Arachnida is a word used to describe spiders. What is the origin of this word?

5. Tolstoy's War & Peace has been adapted as an opera. Who is the composer?

6. Who was Alexander the Great's general who took over the government of Egypt when Alexander died?

7. What are "the Royal Peculiars"?

PUZZLES

MAKING HISTORY

Alan Shepard made history aboard the spacecraft Freedom 7 on May 5, 1961. What did he do? Use the LETTERS below to complete the puzzle and get the answer.

Each letter may be used only once.

U/N/S/A/C/H/B/T/R/O
★ E — E, — EC — ME, — HE
★ F — R — T, AME — I — A —
★ ASTR — NA — T

AMAZING FACTS

* Is yawning contagious? Yes, it is, in fact, I bet you might have yawned already whilst reading this. When your body is tired, your respiratory system slows down and spasm in the muscles of your throat takes place, forcing you to take in more air — hence a yawn.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

* E is the most used letter in the English language.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

* During the American Civil War a Confederate general by the name of Ewell frequently had hallucination when he believed he was a bird. During these times he would chirp like a bird and eat nothing but wheat grains.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

* The word "parlour" originated in monasteries where one room was set aside in which the monks were allowed to speak (parler). The word parliament also comes from the same root, and we all know what a lot of talking goes on there.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

* Christiane Eberhardtine, Queen of Poland 1697-1727, never set foot in that country during the whole of her 30 years reign.

Pakistan – Land of the Indus Valley Civilisation

Ancient and mysterious, for centuries the land which is now Pakistan has attracted scholars and mystics, adventurers and mercenaries. Up its craggy defiles have climbed such warriors and Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan, in search of plunder and glory. More peacefully, its cities of Harappa and Moenjodaro were at the heart of the great Indus Valley Civilisation over 4,500 years ago.

On March 23, 1940, a resolution was adopted by the Muslim League, representing Muslims of British India, demanding a separate independent homeland for the Muslims. Pakistan emerged on the map of the world as a sovereign state on August 14, 1947, when the British Indian Empire was partitioned into two independent states: India and Pakistan.

Modern Pakistan, born in 1947 out of the ashes of Imperial India, has inherited the beauties of its ancient past. Physically a dramatic country, it boasts eight of the world's 10 highest peaks, including the breath-taking K2. Here, in the permanent snow and frost of the far north, giant glaciers spill down the mountain slopes, melting at lower altitudes and filling the gorges below with raging torrents of white water.

Pakistan-Jordan relations

As an Islamic and non-aligned country, Pakistan respectfully supports the principles of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and non-use of force as well as the internationally recognised norms of good neighbourliness, peaceful co-existence and friendly cooperation for mutual benefit. Pakistan, therefore, remains fully committed to upholding the principles and purposes of the U.N. Charter, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organisation of Islamic Conference and equitable world order in which nations can live in peace and security, while devoting their energies to building a prosperous future.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan enjoy very close and cordial relations which are characterised by religious, historic and cultural affinities, commonality of views on important regional and international



Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam
Mohammad Ali Jinnah

issues, cooperation in various fields and moral and material support rendered by the two countries to each other in time of need.

There have been regular high level visits between Jordan and Pakistan. His Majesty King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan who are held in high esteem by the Government and the people of Pakistan, have often visited Pakistan. There have been regular visits by heads of state and governments from Pakistan to Jordan also.

Pakistan has strong economic, trade, cultural and military cooperation with Jordan. Under the Cultural Agreement, Pakistan presently provides large number of seats to Jordanian students in various professional fields. Out of these, three are offered with scholarship by the Ministry of Education. Besides these, any number of students can avail themselves of university education in Pakistani educational institutions on a self-financing basis.

Jordan also avails training programmes in railway courses and commercial banking in Pakistan. Jordan also offers three scholarships to Pakistani students in various educational institutions every year.

Promotion of closer and brotherly relations with the Arab World have been among the guiding principles of Pakistan's foreign policy.

Pakistan's solidarity with the Arab World is the most striking and dominant feature of the history of the Pakistani nation. Support to Arab causes precedes even the



His Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal

Social action plan: An umbrella for the poor

The government has launched an ambitious and innovative Social Action Programme (SAP) aimed at providing basic needs to the poorer and underprivileged of Pakistan's 100 million population, particularly in thousands of villages dotting its countryside. SAP has emerged from years of extensive discussions and decades of cooperation between development planners and donor countries and organisations.

An exhaustive study by the World Bank about alleviation of poverty in Pakistan was particularly helpful in the designing of the \$7 billion social action programme.

SAP is a five year programme, dovetailed into the country's 8th Five Year Plan launched in 1993-94, comprising tens of thousands of small schemes in the lagged social sectors. It has come to be known as the "umbrella" for the poor because it covers and protects thousands of small schemes that aim to supply drinking water to rural population and deliver basic health services at their doorstep to the rural folks.

It was under SAP that several thousand teachers and health workers have been employed by the federal and four provincial governments during the last one year.

SAP deals with primary education, primary health, population planning, sewerage and potable drinking water and government has undertaken an integrated

care service in Pakistan's 48,000 villages. Under the programme, a female trainee with 8-10 years of schooling is being recruited and trained at the nearest Basic Health Unit. Several U.N. agencies like United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, UNFPA and IDA are contributing to this aspect of the primary health care project.

The World Bank board of governors at its last meeting in Washington extended full support to SAP and expressed the hope that this programme would markedly improve Pakistan's "social indicators."

The donors have made it known to the Pakistan government that they are ready to help in the implementation of the social action programme in its second phase.

Pakistan's march to industrialisation

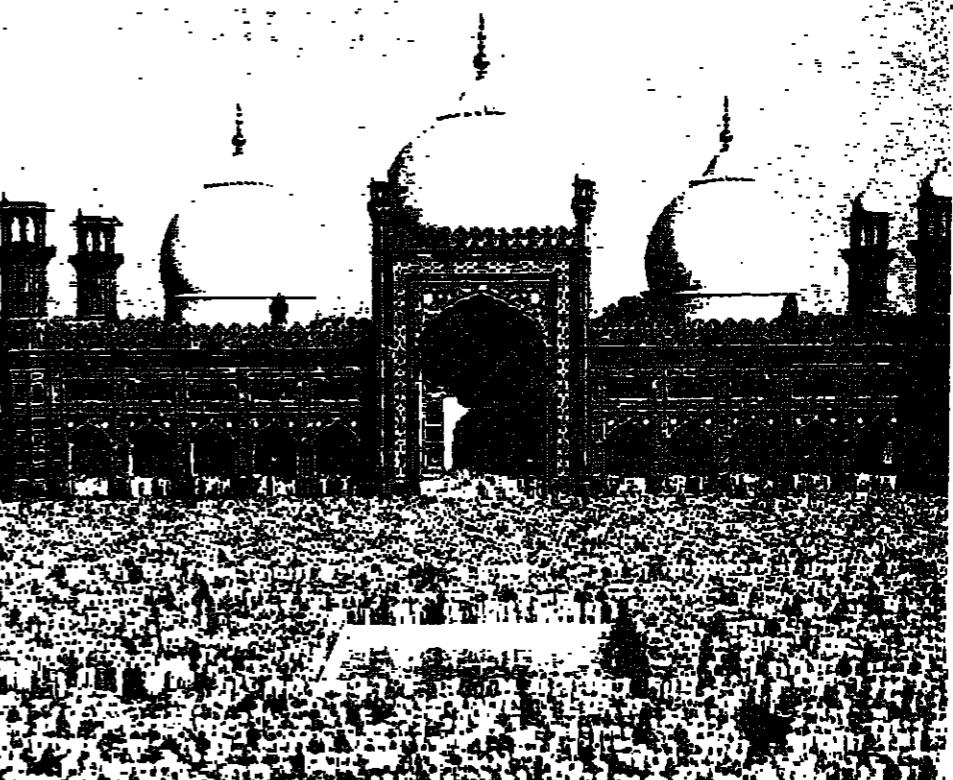
The forward looking economic policies being pursued by the present Pakistan Government have so far attracted over \$18 billion of foreign investments for various energy and infrastructural pro-

Pak-Arab refinery project. The three new ones being set up are Pak-Kuwait, Pak-Iraq and Pak-Oman, having total refining capacity of six million tonnes per annum. The Government has prepared Rs. 700 billion cash programme to generate energy through economic exploitation and correct utilisation of oil, gas, coal and hydroelectricity resources for meeting the country's energy demand growing at the rate of 12 per cent annually.

Hub power station, one of the world's largest private sector power plant and the biggest in Pakistan, is nearing completion and will go into trial production in June next year. According to its chief executive Michael Woodruffe, the plant is expected to meet 13 per cent of the nation's power needs. Woodruffe said, the plant being built near Karachi on a turnkey basis by a consortium of international companies, would go into full commercial operation by March 1997 with a capacity of 1,292 megawatts.

Three coal-based power

(Continued on page C)



Eid prayer at Badshahi Mosque, Lahore,

JORDAN FERTILIZER INDUSTRY COORDINATION COMMITTEE

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Oscar effects — visual tricksters reach new heights

By John Horn
The Associated Press

BEVERLY HILLS, California — Don't trust an all-gummy bear diet, a get-quick-rich scheme involving llamas and, above all else, anything on a movie screen.

Hollywood always has been a town fueled by make-believe, but what's unbelievable is how far the fantasists have come. Even what seems "real" in a movie these days — a scattering flock of birds, a fluttering moth — is often a computer-crafted substitute.

The technology has come so far the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences in February granted branch status to its visual effects members — the first new branch in 42 years.

Three of 1994's most popular live-action films, *Forrest Gump*, *The Mask* and *True Lies*, showcased special effects considered impossible a few years ago. The visual effects teams from all three films

are nominated for Academy Awards, and a look at their work offers a rare peek at the tricks of the trade.

The most eye-catching effects in *Forrest Gump* are the most self-evident: Gump (Tom Hanks) meeting President Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. "But in a big way, the success of *Forrest Gump* is in the less-obvious effects. The archival shots were a third of what the movie is about," says George Murphy, part of the Oscar-nominated visual effects team.

Take the scene early in the film in which Forrest and Jenny hide from her father in a corn field. As the camera pulls back, a flock of birds takes off towards the horizon. It's a lovely, metaphorical shot — except it never happened.

Director Robert Zemeckis tried to use real doves, but they refused to follow his guidance (see if they ever work in this town again). Industrial Light and Magic (ILM)

effects specialists subsequently created a single dove on a computer, digitally copying it to make three dozen. The binary birds were animated, then laid over the shot of Forrest and Jenny, forming a "digital composite" image.

Audiences may say, "how'd they do that?" about the presidents, but most don't notice this deceit. It all looks genuine.

"It would have been the hardest effect several years ago, and it was casual in this film," Murphy says.

Forrest excels at ping-pong, even though Hanks didn't hit a ball on camera. Swinging in rhythm to a rapid-fire metronome, Hanks was filmed miming play. ILM added a blurred ball later.

The Chinese flags in one ping-pong scene were inadvertently hung upside-down, and they were painstakingly righted through a special effect (called a rotoscope) that cut the stars out of the flag and flipped them.

There are dozens of other effects audiences aren't supposed to see. The actor playing young Gump couldn't run well, so in one sprint the actor's face was superimposed on a more athletic stand-in's body. The film's signature feather was guided by a feather that was electronically painted out of every frame.

The archival *Forrest Gump* effects can't help but call attention to themselves. That would be a disaster, however, for the effects on *True Lies*.

"The whole goal of every effects guy is to do digital composites so well the audience is confused," says *True Lies* visual effects supervisor John Bruno, an Oscar-winner nominated for the third year in a row.

A full-throttle action film starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, *True Lies* used almost every arrow in the special effects quiver. Although the story is patently implausible, the film would not work unless it looked as if

Schwarzenegger really was piloting a Harrier jet, blowing up a bridge and jumping off skyscrapers.

"We pushed the realism way beyond anything we thought we could do," Bruno says.

True Lies director Jim Cameron insisted on a single-take shot in which Schwarzenegger's Harry Tasker climbs into a Harrier jet (which can take off vertically) and takes flight. There would be no room for a quick cut to splice in a real jet and months."

All of a sudden, Schwarzenegger's a pilot. Says Bruno: "We worked on that for seven

In another scene, a real pilot and a real Harrier jet were filmed flying into Miami. Technicians isolated the helmet-clad pilot, and with the high-tech equivalent of an ejection seat, discharged him from the plane. A Schwarzenegger stunt double, in T-shirt and without helmet, was put in the pilot's place.

The Mask features a high-tech blend of animation, live action and special effects. When character Stanley Ipkiss dons a wooden mask, he is transformed into a half-man, half-cartoon whirling dervish. Because the movie's makers had a limited budget, they were forced

to make a little go a long way — and make their effects stand out.

"They were never meant to be hidden," said Scott Squires, nominated to *The Mask* visual effects team.

Many of the people who

coming off *Jurassic Park*. In the latter film, they were trying to make the fanciful — modern-day dinosaurs — look real. The equation was reversed in *The Mask*: here the goal was to make the real — actor Jim Carrey — look fanciful.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS WEEK

It is awfully important to know what is and what is not your business — Gertrude Stein, American author (1874-1946).

There are no warlike peoples — just warlike leaders — Ralph J. Bunche, American diplomat (1904-1971).

What is everybody's business is nobody's business — except the journalist's — Joseph Pulitzer, Hungarian-born American newspaper publisher (1847-1911).

It is good to be without vices, but it is not good to be without temptation — Walter Bagehot, English editor and economist (1826-1877).

To know a little less and to understand a little more: That, it seems to me, is our greatest need — James Ramsey Ullman, American author (1907-1971).

(Continued from page B)

plants are also to be set up with the help of the Chinese, American and Hong Kong entrepreneurs in the Sindh Province where huge coal reserves have been found. The Sindh Government plans to set up a 1,320 megawatt coal-based power plant in Thar, a 100 megawatt plant in Thatta and a 120 megawatt plant to Lakhra.

The State-controlled Oil and Gas Development Corporation (OGDC) is currently initiating major development projects at the condensate field at Dhadok and the Qadirpur gas field in the Baluchistan province. It is also participating in the development of the Kandawari gas field under joint venture participation. The Qadirpur and Kandawari gas fields are expected to be brought on production line during the year 1995-96, adding about 500 million metre cubic feet (MMCFD) of gas to the national production. The OGDC is striving to add significant reserves of oil and gas to reduce the country's dependence on imported oil.



Sardar Farooq Ahmed Khan Laghari,
President of Pakistan



Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Prime
Minister of Pakistan

For this, its main target for the Eighth Five Year Plan (1993-94 to 1997-98) will be the drilling of 70 exploratory wells in the country.

Meanwhile, work on the hydrocracker refinery project in Karachi, costing \$500 million, will begin shortly. It will be completed in three years, installing a 1.65 million tonnes per year refinery. It is designed to process heavy fuel oil available from local

refineries in Pakistan and upgrade it into light and middle distillates, thereby reducing the country's imports of these highly priced products and save about \$80 to \$100 million per year in foreign exchange. It will be a joint venture between the Crescent Petroleum Company of Sharjah and the State Petroleum Refining and Petrochemical Corporation of Pakistan. The Crescent com-

pany also has an exclusive mandate from the government of Qatar to sponsor and develop a highly strategic regional project involving Qatar, the northern UAE, and Pakistan. Called the Gulf-South Asia Gas Project, it concerns the sale and purchase of gas and its transmission through a large diameter (mostly subsea) pipeline connecting Qatar's giant north field, through Dubai

and northern UAE to Pakistan with an estimated overall cost of some \$3 billion.

According to secretary, Board of Investment (BOI) Syed Mobibullah Shah Pakistan is expected to receive \$2 of \$3 billion direct foreign investment by the end of the current fiscal year. Direct foreign investment amounting to \$1.2 billion had already been received between July and December 1994. Only three projects signed between Hyundai and Pakistan State Oil, Hyundai and Saigol, and Gil Ahmad and Daewoo would ensure direct foreign investments in Pakistan to the tune of \$1 billion.

In the coming years, investment would start pouring in fast in the energy, telecommunications, chemicals, and infrastructure sectors.

This is commitment of over \$15 billion of foreign investment in addition to the British investment of £1 billion in different sectors within a short span of one year. The BOI has already announced an attractive package of concessions for setting up of electronics, chemicals and palm oil industries

in the country. The board has also decided to start a programme called investor/developer/promoters (IDP) in the 12 industrial zones that have already been announced. The Government will allow foreign and local companies under this programme to develop these industrial zones themselves.

Another project recently approved is the Saindak Project in Baluchistan province which on completion next year will deliver 16,000 tonnes of blister copper annually,

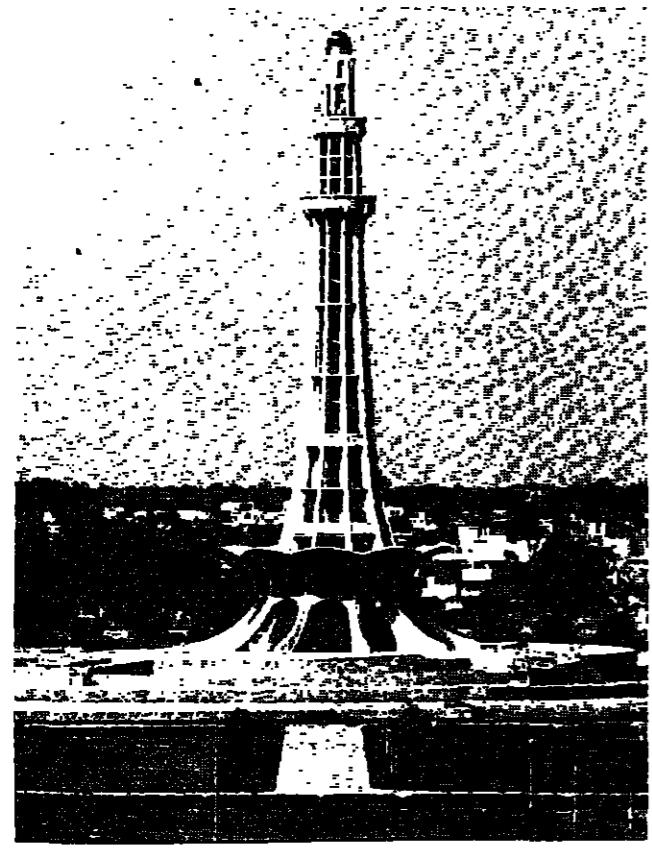
1.5 tonnes of gold and 2.76 tonnes of silver. Side by side,

the government has also approved the setting up of a national task force for the development of minerals.

Pakistan's economy along with its financial sector is undergoing a momental change. The changes and reforms in its macro-economic policies have created unprecedented opportunities for its

economy which in turn would open the world of capital markets for Pakistan enterprises. With the quick development of infrastructure projects holding the key to the acceleration of economic activity, their early implementation remains high on the economic policy agenda of the Government. The National Development Finance Corporation (NDFC) has been efficiently administering the private sector energy development fund which has a pool of resources amounting to \$578 million.

An additional funding of \$370 million has been recently arranged and made part of the energy fund.



Minar-e-Pakistan, Lahore, built at the place where Pakistan resolution was passed in 1940.

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Happy Pakistani National Day

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to come to the

Pakistani People & Government
on the occasion of
Pakistani National Day



ON THE OCCASION OF

PAKISTAN DAY

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"Best wishes to the Embassy of Pakistan,

Amman, on the auspicious

occasion of

the National Day

We wish the Pakistani community in Jordan health and prosperity during the years to come."

Zakaria Jabri and family

Jumping the lights

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaaen

Have you noticed that all of a sudden, everyone has become an expert on traffic issues. It's just like the blind leading the blind.

Tearing down all the stop signs in Amman was the best suggestion all week. It would not make that much of a difference anyway, really! Because nobody obeys the traffic regulations for driving into and around roundabouts. Look what has become of them.

Closing all the U-turns all over Amman and only allowing vehicles to turn at traffic lights is another very good idea. This might appear somewhat extreme, and is certain to provoke a trail of hate mail, but when one of the large buses in Amman blocks off three lanes of traffic on Mecca Street while attempting to do a U-turn, it all ends right there! Of course there is an economic argument against being so extreme and I think that a lot of business owners would agree. Surely you need not drive for one kilometre to turn at the traffic light when you could use the U-turn a hundred feet away?

But why not just have more traffic lights installed. They will certainly help to keep the speed of traffic in check. Or if this is not your sort of ball game, why not keep the U-turns, but for God's sake, do not make them 50 metres wide. Any U-turn need not accommodate more than one car at a time so it need only be so wide, allowing for access by emergency vehicles of course. Most people I think are familiar with the U-turn on Al-Medina Al-Munawwara Street opposite Chen's Chinese Restaurant. Here, you get four lanes of traffic doing the U-turn. Who is to blame for all this mess?

Other known causes of accidents are reckless driving and overtaking on turns and while going uphill. Under the heading reckless drivers, you can enter taxi and bus drivers and kids driving around in daddy's Mercedes Benz. The kids are just spoilt and are a by-product of our society but the bus and taxi drivers have to make a living somehow, don't they? But this is by no means and under no circumstances an acceptable excuse for driving like maniacs while ignoring all other traffic, pedestrians and vehicles included. But these are not the only reckless drivers. Truck drivers in Jordan appear to be truly, dumb, deaf and blind; they ignore all other traffic, presumably because they think they are untouchable in their large vehicles, and they manoeuvre in them just as

they would a motorcycle. One more thing about these trucks. They seem to be under the impression that they can drive at high speeds through residential areas, if that is the shortest route, to go on roads that their trucks would not be able to cope with. How many people you know have been stuck behind a truck whose shameless driver decided to get on a steeply inclined road? Under such circumstances, even the most patient of drivers would be tempted to overtake and take his chances with the oncoming traffic.

So far, the problem seems to be speed, doesn't it? You, whoever you are, take the shortest route through the U-turn, through the residential area, up the steep road, through the red light and you honk your horn when the lights go green at the traffic lights.

For some strange reason, we, Jordanians and all, always seem to be in a hurry when we are on the road. Why? And why has this "rushing" led us to ignore the priorities, rights, needs and lives of other drivers on our roads? Why have we, as a people, become selfish and careless?

Are the reasons economic, political, social, forces of habit, our inability to handle technology... or what?

So many of us call for the betterment of human lives, for more things to be done by the municipalities and for these to be done properly when they are done. But, and in return, don't we as citizens owe our cities and fellow residents far more than we are currently giving?

But how do we implement change?

That's a bagatelle. We turn our attention to the individual. All that is needed is to get one million individuals to change their habits and maybe show a little bit more love, care, sympathy and loyalty for this country. We then move on to improve the quality of the cultural and civic lives of our cities. We involve citizens in the problems of their environment where the raw materials become the citizens and their knowledge, creativity and initiative. We have amongst us numerous wealthy individuals so why don't we convince them to use a portion of their wealth to build public parks, museums or libraries!

We, and only we, can make our cities equitable, where wealth and justice are fairly distributed, ecological, which give to the environment as they take out, open, which embrace new ideas, and beautiful, where art, architecture and landscape move the spirit.

ANSWERS

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

- A marriage union between one of royal or noble rank and one of lower rank in which the wife does not acquire the husband's rank and the offspring do not inherit the titles and possessions of the father.
- The Verrazano-Narrows bridge. Opened in 1964.
- Vienna, in 1923. The organisation's centre is in Paris.
- From the Greek legend of the mortal Arachne who challenged the gods to surpass her at weaving. She failed and was turned into a spider by Minerva.
- Prokofiev.
- Ptolemy I.

PUZZLES

MAKING HISTORY

HE BECAME THE FIRST AMERICAN ASTRONAUT.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

WHEN IN ROME ...

By Norma Steinberg

CROSSWORDS

1. Slave	46. Bartender	79. Hunter, 19th cent.	127. Dismodestous
2. Sarcasm	47. Author	80. Doctor of	128. Great soliloquy
3. Tiresome	48. Give up	81. Turgid	129. Superb
4. Fervent	49. Shovel	82. Cognac	130. Shy
5. Grief	50. Give up	83. Cognac	131. Shy
6. Grief	51. Shovel	84. Cognac	132. Shy
7. Grief	52. Give up	85. Cognac	133. Shy
8. Grief	53. Give up	86. Cognac	134. Shy
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78. Grief	123. Give up	156. Cognac	204. Shy
79. Grief	124. Give up	157. Cognac	205. Shy
80. Grief	125. Give up	158. Cognac	206. Shy
81. Grief	126. Give up	159. Cognac	207. Shy
82. Grief	127. Give up	160. Cognac	208. Shy
83. Grief	128. Give up	161. Cognac	209. Shy
84. Grief	129. Give up	162. Cognac	210. Shy
85. Grief	130. Give up	163. Cognac	211. Shy
86. Grief	131. Give up	164. Cognac	212. Shy
87. Grief	132. Give up	165. Cognac	213. Shy
88. Grief	133. Give up	166. Cognac	214. Shy
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94. Grief	139. Give up	172. Cognac	220. Shy
95. Grief	140. Give up	173. Cognac	221. Shy
96. Grief	141. Give up	174. Cognac	222. Shy
97. Grief	142. Give up	175. Cognac	223. Shy
98. Grief	143. Give up	176. Cognac	224. Shy
99. Grief	144. Give up	177. Cognac	225. Shy
100. Grief	145. Give up	178. Cognac	226. Shy

Diagramless 21 x 21

By James Burwick

ACROSS

1. Grief

2. Grief

3. Grief

4. Grief

5. Grief

6. Grief

7. Grief

8. Grief

9. Grief

10. Grief

11. Grief

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15. Grief

16. Grief

17. Grief

18. Grief

19. Grief

20. Grief

Urgent action needed to save the environment

By P. V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Sounding alarm bells over environmental damage in the Middle East, the World Bank is calling for urgent action to address the problem, which, the World Bank says, will grow into unmanageable proportions if it is not checked now through an all-embracing strategy.

"Real losses resulting from environmental neglect run into billions of dollars every year," while governments spend an equal, if not a higher, amount of funds to address the impact rather than the cause, says the World Bank in a document entitled "Forging a Partnership for Environmental Action."

While the situation is indeed alarming, governments and people in the region could rectify it, the bank says, outlining a strategy to handle the problem.

In simplified terms, the bank says that governments could reap a double-pronged benefit if they redirect their efforts towards removing the root causes of environmental damages. On the one hand, such action checks the recurrence of the problem while on the other it eliminates the need to address its impact.

The proposals involve millions of dollars of expenditure at a regional level, but, says the World Bank, the proposed projects and programmes of action pay for themselves in the medium-term.

The World Bank is offering to "provide, at the request of governments, investment funds and policy advice by mobilising resources in cooperation with other donors" and to play "an active role in existing regional programmes."

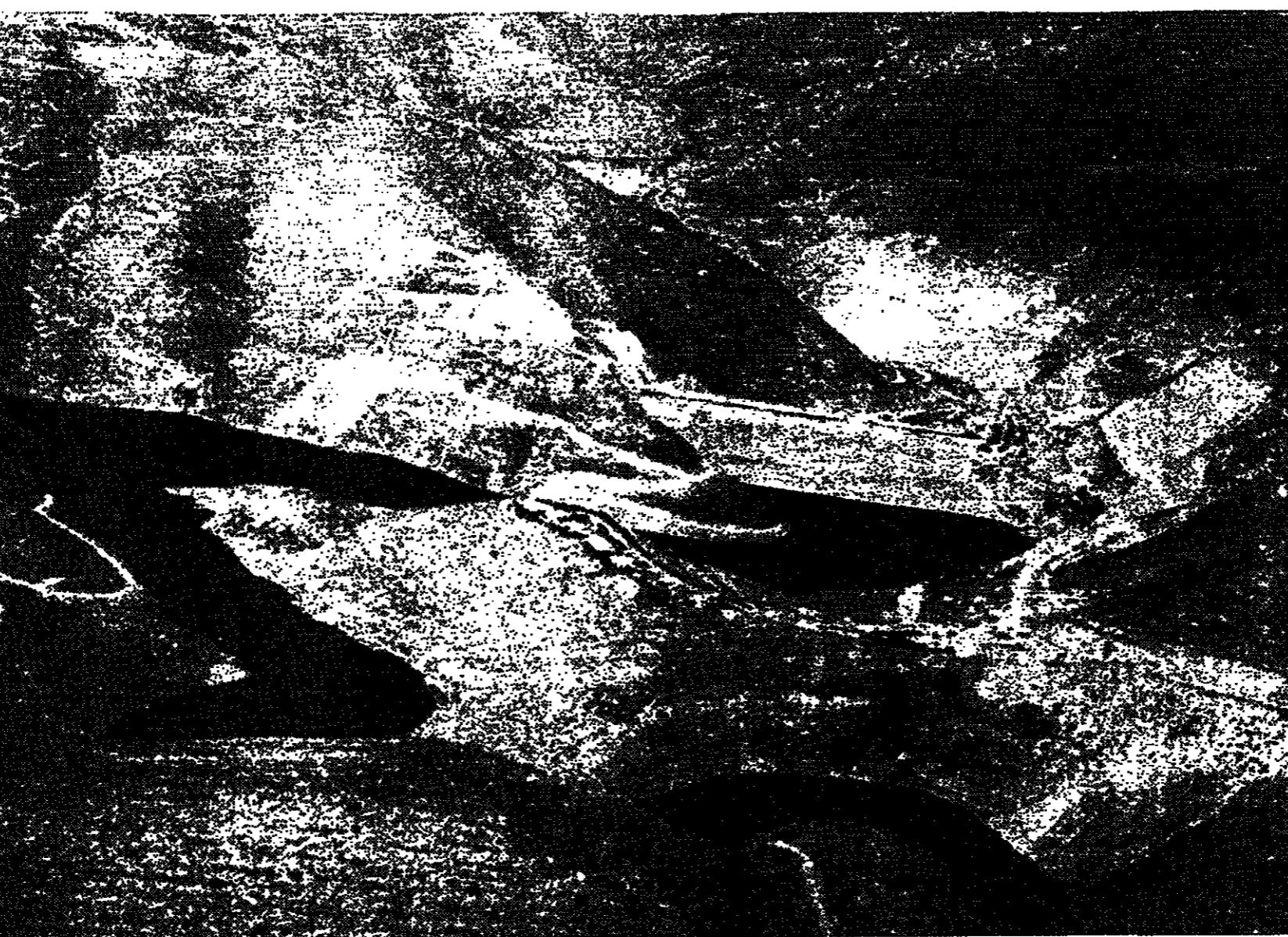
The bank is highly critical of almost every policy followed by the region's governments that has an impact on the environment and it explicitly accuses the governments of relative inaction, which, it warns, will cost the region far higher than it would if action was adopted today.

Environmental protection is a relatively new idea to the Middle East and North Africa, where most governments and people are "preoccupied with basic issues of development to give any serious thought to the problems posed by environmental damage."

The World Bank notes that the countries of the Middle East and North Africa have made impressive progress the last three decades in terms of economic growth, health standards and education. But, it says, "this progress is threatened by the environmental damage that has accompanied it."

"Scarce water, degraded arable land, polluted air and water, and inadequate sanitation threaten the region's capacity to maintain economic growth and absorb mushrooming populations, and impose enormous economic and human costs through disease and early death," it points out.

While the region is endowed with large deposits of oil and gas, only six per cent of the land is arable and the available supply of



The World Bank acknowledges that Jordan has moved to protect its environment but says the Kingdom needs to do more

'Zarqa basin among most polluted areas'

THE WORLD BANK, in "an environment strategy towards sustainable development in the Middle East and North Africa," identifies the Amman-Zarqa area and the Zarqa basin as one of the "industrial pollution hotspots" and one of the "water quality hotspots" in the region.

"In the Zarqa basin, air pollution results from a refinery and a thermal power station," it says. "High levels of sulphur dioxide, hydrogen sulphide, carbon monoxide, particulates, and nitrogen oxides are observed in this region."

Noting that 90 per cent of Jordan's industries are lo-

cated in the Zarqa basin, the bank says that "most of the area's industrial and municipal effluents drain to the King Talal reservoir—the main source of irrigation water for the Jordan Valley and of drinking water of Amman."

"The reservoir receives partially treated sewage, and effluents from the petroleum refinery; and the slaughterhouse, and other industries in the area."

Other references to Jordan in the World Bank document include:

— The Kingdom is among 10 countries in the Middle East and North

Africa region known to be consuming more than 100 per cent of their renewable water resources and among nine countries which have problems of poor water quality.

— Jordan is rationalising energy prices and restoring the financial viability of its energy sector by commercialising power enterprise (a reference to the Jordan Electricity Authority, which is in the process of being turned into a fully-fledged commercial entity under the Companies Law).

The following observations were also made by the World Bank in Jordan's re-

cord of implementing the various suggestions made by the bank towards protecting the environment. It said that Jordan:

— needs to strengthen the capacity of its staff dealing with environmental issues, establish/strengthen the legal framework, establish monitoring systems and enforce licensing requirements;

— is in the process of clarifying and securing land property rights and has removed impediments to market pricing for fertilisers; is regulating the protection of fragile lands, crucial ecosystems, and cultural heritage.

— has to publish information on water quality, hazardous emissions and

waste;

— has established measures to improve water allocation and adopted speeding up of proven technologies for efficient use of water as well as increased prices and reduced subsidies for water;

— needs to remove impediments in the way of adopting clean industrial and transport technology (import restrictions, subsidies), and internalise the social cost of pollution.

— has held consultations with affected parties, local non-governmental organisations and the media;

— has to adopt proven technologies to the efficient use of energy, accelerate

substitution to natural gas, begin conversion to low-sulphur fuel oils and promote conversion to unleaded gasoline and has removed energy subsidies;

— needs to remove impediments in the way of adopting clean industrial and transport technology (import restrictions, subsidies), and internalise the social cost of pollution.

— has prioritised environmental problems and prepare least-cost mitigation plans.

The World Bank says the issue of closing down highly polluting, non-viable public enterprises is not applicable to Jordan.

— Raising electricity and water prices so that they reflect the full cost of supply. It is implicit here that the public pays for the actual cost, whether in the form of subsidies channelled by the government from taxes and other charges or in the form of higher prices. The World Bank notes that the region spends about \$25 billion every year on energy subsidies and the annual costs of water supply investments not currently recovered are about \$12 billion.

— Introducing pollution charges to discourage pollution and raise revenues.

The World Bank estimates that if the region could bring charges comparable to Poland's by the year 2005, it would raise \$1.7 billion per year.

— Introducing efficient pricing to recover the costs involved in solid-waste management, waste-water treatment and sanitation.

— Levying a tax on harmful additives to gasoline.

"All these measures play a dual role: They raise funds for new investments and they provide incentives for more efficient resource use," says the bank.

In the context of the private sector, the bank suggests that private firms be encouraged to finance environmental investments and to manage water and waste-water treatment plants, sanitary landfills and special industries waste facilities that operate on a user-charger basis.

It also points out that foreign private investment and joint ventures can expand natural gas supply, upgrade domestic automobile and truck technology, and introduce clean industrial and energy technology.

Arab support falls short

(Continued from page 1)

Iraq had disappeared before the session.

Last week, under pressure from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the Sudanese withdrew a proposal to join Iraq's fight for lifting U.N. sanctions. The wealthy Gulf countries threatened to withdraw funding from the league, which already has financial problems.

Iraq urged the Arab League to condemn the United States for its insistence to keep sanctions on Baghdad unchanged.

The Arab League is called upon today to expose the suspicious American role... in imposing sanctions on Iraq and persistence to continue the conference.

"We support this treaty," Khalifa said. "We believe it is good."

Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait has also split the Arab countries. While calls for Arab reconciliation were made at the conference, any sense of strong backing for

with them," the ruling Baath Party newspaper said, quoting a statement by Iraq's Foreign Ministry.

It said the statement was made on the league's anniversary.

"We are looking forward to the Arab League... to heal the rift in inter-Arab relations," the statement said.

Iraq accused the league on Tuesday of bias for supporting the extension of U.N. sanctions, saying it ignored the suffering of Iraqis. It also accused Secretary-General Abdal Meguid of colluding with Iraq's enemies to keep the sanctions in place.

The attitude of the Arab League towards Iraq is astonishing and embarrassing," Al Thawra said in a separate commentary.

Iran has deployed chemicals

(Continued from page 1) in the region, Vice Admiral Scott Redd.

"It is a deployment that is far beyond any reasonable defence requirements that Iran has," said the Pentagon chief before his departure for the UAE.

Mr. Perry said he was to discuss with UAE officials

Palestinian police arrest suspects

(Continued from page 1)

to the reports of the aborted attack, saying militants were hunting their Palestinian brethren economically by prompting a new Israeli closure of Gaza.

Dr. Tibi said Hamas was timing its attacks to sabotage PLO achievements at the negotiating table and undermine Mr. Arafat's standing. "I'm sure one of the purposes is to prevent the Palestinian Authority from getting power in its hands," Dr. Tibi said.

The rigged truck was discovered only a day after men suspected to be Hamas activists shot and killed two Jewish settlers in a roadside ambush in the West Bank town of Hebron.

In response to the shooting, Jewish settler leaders on Wednesday called for an insurrection aimed at bringing down the Rabin government.

"I'm talking about a legitimate civil insurrection," Zvi Katzover, "mayor" of the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba just outside Hebron, told Israel army radio.

"In every democratic society, it is permissible to go out

and demonstrate and block roadways... and prevent the prime minister from entering his house and office."

Settlers were also incensed by the remarks of a dovish cabinet minister Yossi Sarid, who said 450 Jews living among 110,000 Palestinians in Hebron should be evacuated as quickly as possible.

The moment the government starts evacuating Jews from Hebron, we will come armed," another settler leader, Nissan Shlomiantsky, told AP.

Mr. Shlomiantsky, head of operation in the settlers' council, said protesters would not use violence against Israeli soldiers, but that "the Jews will come and evacuate the Arabs."

Hebron's mayor urged Mr. Rabin to lift a round-the-clock curfew, calling it a "campaign of cruelty" against the city's residents.

The army said it imposed the curfew on Monday to protect Palestinians from revenge attacks for the killing of two Jewish settlers Sunday night.

King, Queen arrive in Paris

(Continued from page 1)

that aid to Jordan would match that of Israel and Egypt, but said, "if Jordan is capable of taking the bold, courageous and dramatic step that it took to further the cause of peace in the Middle East, I can assure you that we are capable of keeping our word."

While in Washington, the King will also meet with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Defence Secretary William Perry and Commerce Secretary Ron Brown as well as American Jewish leaders.

Syria, Israel take a break

(Continued from page 1)

ing the army chiefs of staff of Syria and Israel.

They said a December session in which the Syrian and Israeli chiefs of staff took part had failed because of tough Israeli demands, including one for preservation of Israeli observation posts at the Golan.

Al Thawra said the current session was very important "because its outcome will decide the fate of the peace process."

Economy

JORDAN TIMES, THURSDAY-FRIDAY, MARCH 23-24, 1995

Revolt brews over world trade body leadership deal

GENEVA (R) — Developing countries in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) hinted Wednesday they might withdraw quick endorsement of a big-power deal under which Italy's Renato Ruggiero would become head of the new body.

Envoy from Asia, Africa and Latin America said they wanted more details on the deal and also clarification of remarks by Mr. Ruggiero in Washington on including discussion of trade and labour conditions in the WTO agenda.

"We are not at all happy with the way this has been handled," said one key envoy after discussions with colleagues from other emerging economies. "It is far from certain that we can agree at this stage."

The revolt among developing countries, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the 128 present and pending members of the WTO, brewed as Mr. Ruggiero headed for talks with envoys in Geneva, probably on Thursday.

Developing-country envoy had also been alarmed by

Mexico in the wake of his country's financial crisis and a political scandal, most of his support had gone to Mr. Ruggiero, giving him an unassailable lead.

Developing-country diplomats, some of whom had backed Mr. Kim, expressed anger over the Washington-Seoul deal. "Who are these two to decide for everyone else that there will be a fourth deputy director-general?" demanded one.

There are presently three deputies to the current WTO chief, Peter Sutherland of Ireland — from the United States, Mexico and India. Under WTO rules, deputies are appointed by the director-general himself.

Envoy from African countries in the WTO met Wednesday to discuss their stand. Some said they felt their dignity had been affronted by the offer of a deputy post to Mr. Kim, who would be the second Asian in that role, while there was no African.

Developing-country envoy had also been alarmed by

January as it rapidly faded as a market for American exports.

The department revised its previous estimate of the overall December deficit down slightly to \$12.23 billion from \$12.34 billion reported a month ago.

The trade gap was far worse than anticipated by Wall Street economists, who had forecast a \$9.05 billion shortfall and seemed certain to renew pressure against the dollar, which has already set record lows.

The huge January deficit occurred despite an improvement in trade with Japan from December. Trade with economically ailing Mexico produced a large deficit in

January as it rapidly faded as a market for American exports.

The department revised its previous estimate of the overall December deficit down slightly to \$12.23 billion from \$12.34 billion reported a month ago.

The United States typically runs a surplus on trade with other countries in services such as travel and tourism that partly offsets big deficits on trade in merchandise or goods such as cars and television sets.

In January, the merchandise deficit climbed 33 percent to a record \$17.19 billion from \$12.90 billion in December. At the same time,

the surplus on services shrank 12 per cent to \$4.96 billion from \$5.64 billion in December.

Total imports of goods and services increased 2.9 per cent in January to a record \$72.93 billion while exports fell 4.6 per cent to \$60.70 billion.

Exports of civilian aircraft plummeted nearly \$1 billion to \$524 million in January from \$1.47 billion in December and were the weakest for any month since February 1978, the department said.

Capital goods exports of all types dropped \$1.1 billion from December's pace to \$16.84 billion as the United States recorded its first

monthly deficit on this key category of highly manufactured goods.

On a country-by-country basis, the politically sensitive deficit on trade in goods with Japan declined 12.5 per cent to \$4.86 billion from \$5.55 billion in December. But the deficit with China, the other rapidly emerging Asian trade giant, kept climbing by a steep 34 per cent in January to \$2.72 billion.

Car trade accounts for about two-thirds of the total deficit on trade with Japan and is a continual source of friction that has led to several brawls. On Tuesday, Commerce Secretary Ron Brown

said he hoped for an early resumption of car trade talks with Japan and said the United States will do all it can to force Japanese trade barriers down.

The deficit with Western Europe ballooned more than 500 per cent to \$1.30 billion in January from \$206 million in December. In trade with Mexico, the United States registered a shortfall of \$863 million, a turnaround from December's small surplus of \$19 million that is likely to be the first in a series of deficits as Mexico struggles to right its economy.

The stronger U.S. economy has been drawing in imported consumer goods while Europe and Japan are growing more slowly.

The cost of imported petroleum products fell to \$3.94 billion in January from \$4.02 billion in December. The price per barrel of imported crude oil rose to \$15.05 from \$14.71.

Imports of cars and parts from all sources rose to \$11.13 billion in January from \$10.73 billion in December.

The deficit with Canada, the United States' single largest trading partner, declined to \$1.35 billion in January from \$1.57 billion in December.

Kuwaiti sees limited foreign role in sell-offs

KUWAIT (R) — Privatisation in Kuwait will depend more on domestic than foreign investors because of restrictions on foreign ownership of assets, a commercial banker has said.

"The realities of our market place are that foreign investment will always constitute a relatively modest part of overall capital formation in Kuwait," Ibrahim Dabdoub, chief general manager of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), told an investment conference.

"This in turn means that the success of privatisation hinges on its ability to attract sufficient domestic capital, and to a lesser extent capital from other GCC countries."

He argued. He noted that only citizens of the six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) may own shares on companies listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange.

By law foreigners may own up to 49 per cent of Kuwaiti firms but only up to 40 per cent of banks and insurance companies.

The government is in the early stages of transferring its total \$2.7 billion stake in more than 60 local companies to the domestic private sector over the next three to five years.

The first few sales were restricted to GCC purchasers.

The government wants to

attract back into Kuwait some of the estimated \$60 billion to \$100 billion Kuwaitis held in private assets outside the country.

Mr. Dabdoub said that to the extent that privatisation sales were restricted to GCC buyers, then Kuwaiti banks were the ideal choice to coordinate the issues given their local knowledge.

He said it might be premature to lift Kuwait's curbs on foreign ownership of assets because "the absorptive capacity of the capital market for portfolio investment is still quite limited in view of the small size and the low level of the liquidity in the equity market."

He said foreigners would prefer direct investment in joint venture industrial projects to holdings of equity portfolios.

He cited a joint venture investment by America's Union Carbide Corp. in a \$2 billion petrochemical complex south of Kuwait City due to start up in 1997. It is one of the few major foreign investments planned in the oil-rich emirate.

Mr. Dabdoub said other targets of possible foreign interest were plans to privatise telecommunications and possibly power and water utilities, and tentative plans to allow a resumption of foreign participation in oil exploration and production.

India moves to boost infrastructure

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India is hoping to lure sizeable foreign investment with a recently unveiled five-year tax holiday to improve its leaky infrastructure, singled out as the main obstacle to rapid industrial growth.

The incentive follows the offer of counter-guarantees assuring 16 per cent annual returns on investments to eight foreign-funded power projects and the floating of tenders of dollars to meet current and future demand.

"Adequate quantity, quality and reliability of infrastructure are key determinants of the growth of the overall economy," the government said in its annual survey of the economy.

"Most infrastructure services in India have until recently been provided by public monopolies beset by severe problems like lack of accountability, low productivity, poor financial performance and overemployment," the report said.

It said the government did not have the money to improve the sector, and called for private capital flows to fund infrastructure projects.

Investments have been shy flowing into the capital-intensive, high-risk sector.

— a poor road network, in-

sufficient aviation and port facilities, shortage of power and lack of modern telecommunications — are seen as serious hurdles to industrial growth in India.

Many foreign investors have shied away from setting up projects in the country citing the absence of crucial infrastructure, which needs an infusion of several billions of dollars to meet current and future demand.

India's financial institutions can only fund 1,000 megawatts a year, and industry has warned that economic growth stands the risk of being short-circuited because of electricity shortages.

The country has a total road length of two million kilometres, most of which is poorly maintained and struggling under increasing traffic load.

An Asian Development Bank study has recommended the building of 10,000 kilometres of expressways, which will cost \$25 billion. Improving existing roads could cost \$21 billion.

The country's sea ports are

burdened by severe congestion and mercantile vessels now spend about half their operating time simply unloading.

Airports are struggling to meet the increased traffic brought by 18 domestic private airlines that have mushroomed under an "open skies" policy of 1991. The government has announced a cap on new airplane purchases by them.

Telecommunications, with three million people waiting for a telephone connection in a country which has less than eight telephones per 1,000 people, needs investments of \$7.1 billion to meet government targets to provide a telephone on demand by 1997.

"If we are to aim at economic growth of seven to eight per cent, which alone can provide the jobs we need for our growing labour force, then we need much larger investment and much greater efficiency in key infrastructural sectors," Finance Minister Singh said.

will induce major investments into infrastructure, which is a major area of concern," the government's chief economic adviser, Shankar Acharya, said.

Perennially power-short India needs to more than double its current electricity generation of 72,000 megawatts by 2007 to meet demand, according to industry estimates.

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Renato Ruggiero

The candidate of the European Union (EU) to become the first long-term director-general of the WTO, he had appeared certain to get the job Tuesday when the United States which had long opposed him swung support behind the Italian.

But in a mysterious backstage deal, Washington apparently won the withdrawal from the race of Kim Chul-su of South Korea, the only other remaining contender, by offering him a consolation prize — the post of deputy to Mr. Ruggiero.

Many trade diplomats were puzzled why the United States should feel the need to accommodate Mr. Kim, who like Mr. Ruggiero had earlier been described as "unacceptable" by a senior aide to U.S. Trade Representative Michael Kantor.

Since the withdrawal of the U.S. candidate, ex-president Carlos Salinas de Gortari of

reports from Washington that Mr. Ruggiero, in a new conference with Mr. Kantor Tuesday, had said the explosive "trade and labour" issue should be discussed in the WTO.

"We will certainly want to know exactly what his views are on that," said one ambassador. "If he says he will push the social clause, then I don't see how we can support him."

But other envoys said the 64-year-old Ruggiero, currently an executive of the Fiat Motor Company, would probably argue that his response to questions on the issue had only been intended to suggest it could be raised in the WTO if delegations wanted it.

The United States fought hard in 1993 and 1994 to have the trade and labour link — covering the claimed advantage developing countries have in selling goods made with cheap labour — included on the WTO agenda.

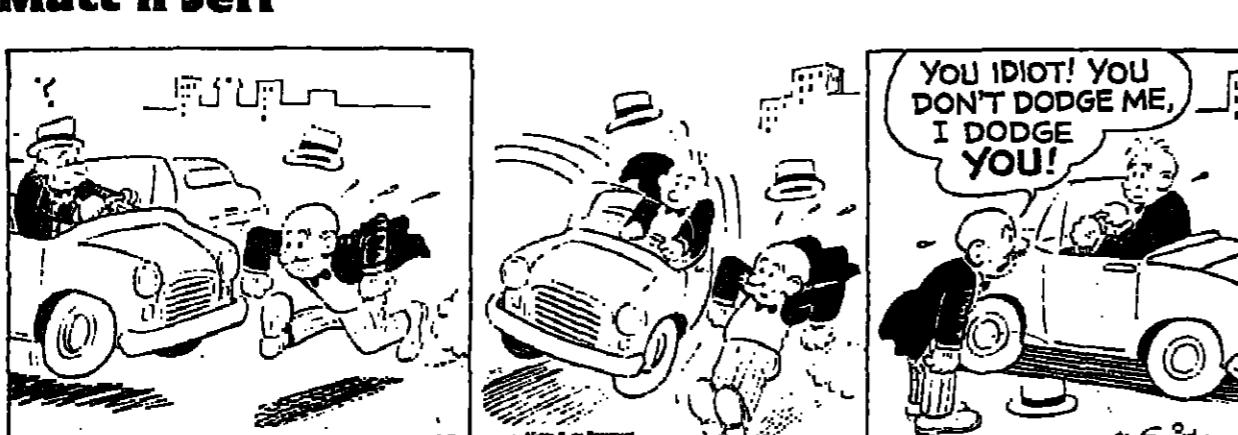
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF



"According to this chart, I'm the exact perfect weight for a man my age, my height, with my name."

JUMBLE

THAT SCRABLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Mike Arligton

KREAM

NISEG

KHEELS

BLOIME

Answer here: A

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumble: BEGOT

Answer: What climbers ultimately look forward to — GETTING DOWN

THE Daily Crossword

by Diane C. Baldwin

ACROSS

1 Bar ills

2 Dumb

10 Mahala site

14 Cennum-

garthum

15 Dark TV fare

17 Faded pair

20 Conclusion

21 Scorn

22 Houston player

23 Run

25 Museum display

26 On person

31 Ah me!

34 French breed

35 Tiff

37 Celestial pa-

per

41 Ambulance crew

42 Family circle

43 Balloons

45 Voyage

48 Was untrifl-

49 Competition

53 Tarn

56 Poison

Business & Finance

**Business
Daily
Beat**

A review
of economic news
from the Arabic press

**Jordan earns
JD 443 million
from tourism
last year,
sees JD 553m
for 1995**

★★ JORDAN EARNED a record JD 443 million (about \$630 million) from tourism last year. Sources at the Ministry of Tourism said the previous record was JD 314 registered in 1989. The sources expect income from tourism to increase by 25 per cent to JD 553 million in 1995. The total number of tourists who visited Jordan last year was approximately 630,000 of whom 405,000 were Arabs, 191,000 from Europe, 70,000 from the U.S. and 30,000 from other countries (Al Aswag).

★★ A DELEGATION from the Civil Aviation Authority initialised an accord with the authorities in South Africa. Under the agreement, Royal Jordanian will be able to fly to South Africa twice a week (Al Dustour).

★★ THE BOARD of directors of the National Engineering Industries Company (NEIC) is recommending to the general assembly merging the company with the National Multi-Industries Company (NMIC) and raising the capital of the new company by JD 3.75 million to JD 30 million. The board of the directors of the NMIC is also recommending the merger to its general assembly (Al Aswag).

★★ THE BANK of Jordan posted about JD 6 million in pre-tax profit last year. The bank's total assets amounted to JD 405.1 million at the end of 1994 compared to JD 298.2 million at the end of 1993. Credits climbed from JD 138.8 million in 1993 to JD 186 million in 1994 while the rise in total deposits was from JD 225.6 million to JD 324.6 million last year (Al Aswag).

★★ THE RAFIA Industrial Company had JD 2,716,528 of sales last year and, as a result, succeeded in achieving a JD 299,594 profit. The board of directors is recommending to the general assembly the distribution of dividends at a rate of 20 per cent. The company, which makes plastic weaving bags made of polypropylene in different sizes, has a total of JD 3,456,362 in assets (Al Aswag).

★★ THE BOARD of directors of the Jordan Worsted Mills Company is recommending to the general assembly the distribution of dividends at 22 per cent and allocating 20 per cent of the profit to the voluntary reserve in addition to the 10 per cent obligatory reserve (Al Aswag).

★★ THE ARAB Paper Converting and Trading Company hiked net profit from JD 27,000 in 1993 to JD 378,000 last year. The company's sales grew from JD 1.64 million in 1993 to JD 2.77 million in 1994 with exports jumping from JD 802,000 to about JD 1.45 million. Local sales were also up by 60 per cent with a 14-fold rise in net profit, the board of directors is recommending a 10 per cent dividend distribution.

★★ THE JORDAN GULF Real Estate Investment Company seeks to expand its base of operations by entering the tourism and hotel sector through merging with another company. According to the 1994 annual report, the company is now in a good financial situation having a fully-paid capital of JD 4.5 million. It owns a 12,000-square-metre building in Amman and 139 dunums of land on the airport highway valued at JD 3.75 million. The company made a JD 28,748 profit last year. At the end of 1993, it had an accumulated loss of JD 1.95 billion which shrunk the capital from JD 3 million to only JD 1.05 million (Al Aswag).

New bank for exports likely to start late '95

By Saleh Al Khalidi
Reuter

AMMAN — Jordan's Central Bank has granted its first licence since the late 1970s to a specialist bank to service a rapidly growing export finance market, its founders said Wednesday.

Jordan Export and Finance Bank, with a capital of 20 million dinars (\$29 million), is expected to start operating at the end of 1995, said Ziyad Fariz, head of the founding committee.

Dr. Fariz told Reuters it would be an "exporters bank" that will be specialising directly and indirectly in providing financial packages to meet exporters' short and long-term needs."

The bank will raise 50 per cent of its capital in a private placement with over 100 in-

dustrial shareholders. The public will be offered 30 per cent and 20 per cent will go under a central bank requirement, to state-owned investment bodies.

Major shareholders include Jordan's pharmaceutical holding company Hikma Investments, the industrial Nuqqa Group, Jordan's phosphates and potash industry, leading insurance companies and members of Jordan's Trade Association.

Ali Al Husry, a co-founder from Hikma Investments, said founders were considering offering foreign investors a share.

The Central Bank obliges the bank, under an initial licence approved last month, to have a minimum of 50 per cent of its business in export-related activity.

Founders say the bank will

meet the need for long-term financing for export firms. Jordan's industrial bank provides the larger part at present.

Dr. Fariz said the bank will provide non-traditional financing for industrialists to expand, obtain credit abroad and domestically, and be a conduit for foreign aid designed to boost Jordanian ex-

ports.

"There is high potential demand with a structural adjustment programme that has an export strategy and increased opportunities created with the regional peace developments," he said.

Jordan has over 600 exporting companies. Exports rose 14.8 per cent in 1994 to 795 million dinars (\$1.1 bil-

lion) from 691 million dinars in 1993 (\$1.0 billion). There has been a growth in exports beyond the traditional phosphates and potash.

The Central Bank has ordered them to raise their capital to 20 million dinars (\$29 million) by 1997 in what is seen as an effort to force mergers.

JORDAN TIMES, THURSDAY-FRIDAY, MARCH 23-24, 1995

Australia woos million-dollar business migrants

CANBERRA (R) — High-flying business people, particularly in Asia and Africa, are to be offered a chance to settle permanently in Australia by depositing at least 750,000 Australian dollars (\$550,000) in government securities for a minimum three years.

Immigration Minister Nick Bolks said Wednesday that in anticipation of a rush of inquiries the government was raising the number of business migrants it will allow to settle in Australia. The scheme comes into effect on April 3.

A scheme for business people to settle permanently by laying several hundred thousand dollars in Australian banks was scrapped in 1991 when it was found that deposits were being moved back out of Australia and used again by other migrants.

Under the new scheme, potential business migrants must deposit between 750,000 Australian dollars (\$550,000) and 2 Australian dollars million in designated government securities for a minimum three years.

They must show they earned the funds from legitimate business or investment activities in their home countries, have business/management skills and good English and preferably be

aged around 30 to 45 years.

If anyone decided not to take up the option of emigrating to Australia, the deposit would be returned with interest.

The scheme aims to attract business migrants from around the world. But an immigration department official, who asked not to be identified, said inquiries were expected in particular from business people in Hong Kong, South Africa and Kenya — main sources of business migrants in recent years.

Australia, striving to broaden its economy from rural and mineral exports, has already taken in 15,000 business people and their families as part of its immigrant intake since 1981.

They have entered under business immigrant programmes under which candidates have to demonstrate their expertise under a points system, backed up by business equity.

Mr. Bolks said the number of business migrants to be allowed to stay permanently in Australia would rise by 500 to 2,100 in the fiscal year ending June 30, with further expansion in future years.

Australia is set to take in a total of 76,000 immigrants in 1994/95 in all categories, up from 63,000 in 1993/94.

Sri Lanka seeks more jobs in M.E.

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — The government wants to get 300,000 people jobs in foreign countries this year in addition to the half a million already employed abroad, officials said Wednesday.

A government delegation is to hold talks with the Emir and prime minister of Kuwait, and the labour ministers of Lebanon, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to promote job opportunities for Sri Lankans.

"We want to negotiate more opportunities for male workers and skilled and semi-skilled workers," said Labour Minister Mahinda Rajapakse, who is leading the delegation on a two-week

tour that begins Thursday. Seventy-five per cent of Sri Lankans working abroad are women, nearly all of them as house maids in the Middle East.

"We want to correct the imbalance and send more men abroad, especially in other professions such as the construction industry to avoid exploitation. We would like to capture 10 per cent of jobs for foreign workers in the Middle East," said Mr. Rajapakse.

Sri Lankans working abroad were the nation's largest money-earners last year, remitting 33 billion rupees (\$675 million).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - SIMEISAN TELEPHONE: 660170 / 663170 ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 22/3/1995					
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	PREV. TRADED	CLOSING PRICE	INDEX NUMBER	CHANGE
JORDAN BANK PIC	200	37288	187.500	186.888	-0.31%
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1818	7895	4.230	4.250	+0.20%
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	2952	12546	4.250	4.260	+0.24%
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	1000	1400	1.400	1.400	0.00%
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	400	1046	2.720	2.640	-0.28%
THE HOUSING BANK	8613	51728	6.040	6.020	-0.33%
JORDAN INDUSTRIES	5619	17129	2.100	2.080	-0.11%
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	6590	24775	3.770	3.760	-0.03%
BUSINESS BANK	23400	77239	3.300	3.300	0.00%
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	1260	4599	3.640	3.650	+0.27%
HEIBEL ELHAL SAVINGS & INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	250	750	2.970	3.000	+0.91%
ARAB BANK FOR EXPORTS	2650	2250	1.050	1.070	+0.19%
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	1100	1353	1.230	1.230	0.00%
BANKS S SECTOR	126562	414559	INDEX NUMBER: 157.61		
JORDAN INSURANCE	2000	6500	3.400	3.250	-0.38%
JERUSALEM INSURANCE	200	840	4.100	4.150	+0.12%
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	6550	16585	2.510	2.540	+1.14%
INSURANCE S SECTOR	8840	24086	INDEX NUMBER: 134.73		
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	2083	3252	1.560	1.570	+0.06%
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	3000	4462	1.480	1.490	+0.07%
JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM	180	1233	6.850	6.850	0.00%
JORDAN MINES MINERALS	500	1400	2.900	2.800	-0.35%
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	50360	25630	5.000	5.000	0.00%
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS / NEW	64	309	4.850	4.850	0.00%
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	5450	15847	2.920	2.940	+0.65%
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	500	560	1.100	1.120	+1.78%
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALRA'I	4250	44220	10.750	10.400	-3.45%
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	26750	61410	2.260	2.290	+1.34%
ARAB INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	3200	10753	3.380	3.350	-0.90%
JORDAN EXPANSION ENTREPRENEUR HOLDING	6450	11540	1.380	1.380	0.00%
SERVICES S SECTOR	104787	411913	INDEX NUMBER: 125.71		
JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	18	466	26.000	25.900	-0.38%
ATTACHEE CONSECT. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	900	920	1.200	1.200	0.00%
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	21416	64098	2.990	2.990	0.00%
THE ARAB POTASH / NEW	600	2680	4.500	4.500	0.00%
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	950	8744	9.150	9.230	+0.87%
THE INDUSTRIAL COOPERATIVE & AGRICULTURAL	554	1926	3.490	3.470	-0.53%
THE INDUSTRIAL COOPERATIVE & AGRICULTURAL	21700	87587	4.020	4.030	+0.25%
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	3040	17903	5.950	5.890	-1.04%
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	500	1340	2.650	2.680	+1.15%
THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	316	791	2.500	2.500	0.00%
SPINNING & WEAVING	13850	37632	2.700	2.730	+1.11%
RAFIA INDUSTRIES	7600	8218	1.050	1.100	+4.62%
DAM & DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	6600	4249	.660	.640	-3.03%
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	6100	7892	1.260	1.320	+4.76%
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	4940	13122	2.080	2.100	+1.00%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	4650	29528	6.300	6.350	+0.80%
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	26200	16505	.630	.620	-1.56%
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	7550	10442	1.410	1.390	-1.41%
INDUSTRIAL PLASTIC INDUSTRIES	2000	6800	3.400	3.400	0.00%
JORDAN ROCKWOOL INDUSTRIES	11250	11250	2.000	2.000	0.00%
J					

Lipton Championships Graf, Wilander move into quarters

KEY BISCAYNE (R) — The Steffi Graf of old and a renewed Mats Wilander dominated the stadium court action at the \$4.1 million Lipton Championships Tuesday.

Graf ripped apart Judith Wiesner of Austria, giving up just eight points in the first set and 11 in the second to her hapless four-round opponent in a 6-0 6-1 rout.

The 30-year-old Wilander appeared to turn back the clock to 1988, when the Swede was on top of the tennis world, as he cruised into the Lipton quarter-finals.

Wilander, who won three of four grand slam events in 1988, breezed past Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands for a 6-4 6-2 fourth round victory. Wilander, ranked 128, has lost just two sets in four rounds.

Australian Rachel McQuillan, at 88 the lowest ranked woman left in the field, scored her third upset of the week, and by far her biggest, when she took sixth seed Lindsay Davenport 7-6 (7-3) 6-2.

Davenport has been suffering from a cold and lost form and energy after the first set.

Gabriela Sabatini of



Mats Wilander of Sweden hits a double-handed backhand (AFP photo)

Argentina, the fifth seed, swept past 14th-seeded south African Amanda Coetzer 6-1 6-1 to join McQuillan in the

quarter-finals.

Third-seeded Czech Jana Novotna, seventh seed Kimiko Date of Japan and eighth

seeded German Anke Huber also claimed quarter-final berths with straight sets victories.

Although Graf has won the only two tournaments she has played this year, she was plagued late in 1994 and at the start of 1995 by injuries. Last year her results were patchy, especially her first round exit at Wimbledon.

However, on Tuesday, Graf, seeded second and ranked second in the world, simply pounded her opponent into oblivion with a barrage of wicked groundstrokes.

Wilander's form was near perfect against Siemerink as he stroked shots down the line for winners, claiming the first set 6-4.

Siemerink fought hard, serving up winners to hold on for 5-7, but Wilander served out the match 6-2 with a clean forehand pass down the line.

"When you suddenly feel like you can win again your perspective changes completely," Wilander said.

"I've got the momentum going for me for sure. I think what I'm using most is my experience but also my legs. I'm still able to get around the court pretty good and I don't feel like an old man."

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Third-seeded Czech Jana Novot

rt
er lifts
Indiana, New York and Phoenix lose

Boming. Parche had 23 points off the bench; including five during a second-quarter run, as the Orlando Magic routed the Phoenix Suns 126-102.

to determine Wednesday finished with 26 points apiece for Orlando, to convert his best record from the Suns, improving to 49-17.

"If we want to be the best, one," the judge Orlando coach Brian Hill said.

afforded to Charles Barkley had 23

points and 11 rebounds for

Phoenix.

In Detroit, Allan Houston scored 28 points, Grant Hill 25, and the Detroit Pistons held the New Jersey

Graf, of course, to three field goals in

the last 6:13 on the way to a

12-95 victory.

who became the Pistons' first Rookie to score

000 points since Isiah Thomas.

opped from the Suns and Kelly Tripucka in

to code it to 8 points and eight assists,

spiking Detroit snap a six-

game losing streak.

"We had guys go a little bit

vermine because we had

player, so people in foul trouble and we

return of the serious matchup prob-

lem. Miami was so we had to keep cer-

tain people on the floor,"

said Detroit coach Don Chaney

of the Pistons.

The Pistons also got 17

points from Lindsey Hunter

and 16 and 12 rebounds from

River Miller.

In Miami, Glen Rice

scored 28 points, including

the race to set game-winner with 1:8

seconds left, as the Miami

heat held off the Indiana

10 seconds, 97-95.

"I looked at the clock, saw

there were four seconds left,"

said Rice. "They'd be waiting

for my jumper, so I showed

them my new cross-over

move. This is the first game

we have won all season down

the stretch. It's about time I

have played like G-Money

(his nickname).

Kevin Willis contributed 19

points and 15 rebounds and

the win combined with Indiana's loss to Miami moved Charlotte into first place in the Central Division.

Patrick Ewing had 35

points and 18 rebounds to

lead the Knicks.

In Houston, Sam Perkins'

hook shot late in the fourth

quarter gave Seattle the lead

for good and Nate McMillan

two steals 20 seconds

apart in the final 1:30 as the

Seattle supersonics hung on

for a 104-102 victory over the

Houston Rockets.

Perkins' shot gave Seattle a

97-96 lead and made a pair of

free throws almost a minute

later to give the Sonics a

99-96 lead with 2:00 to play.

"I was able to get a couple

of reads on their outlet passes

and I was able to see where

Houston wanted to get the

ball," McMillan said. "I got

to the spot and came up with

the big steal."

Houston had one last

chance to tie, but Vernon

Maxwell's layup went off the

rim as time expired.

In Milwaukee, Todd Day

scored 33 points, including

a string of 13 straight in the

fourth quarter, as the Milwauke

ee Bucks beat the Golden

State Warriors, 115-109.

"Todd Day carried us in

the fourth quarter," said coach

Mike Dunleavy.

The state prosecutor has

had a jail sentence of

18 months, 12 of them sus-

pended, against the former

left-wing cabinet minister.

The prosecutor's request at

the trial in the northern

mining town of Valenciennes

was the first formal call

for Tapie, who faces a

string of other legal actions

over his collapsed business

empire, to be sent to pris-

on.

In Portland, Clifford

Robinson scored 30 points

and 10 rebounds in the

Portland Trail Blazers

edged the Washington Bul-

lets, 109-106, for their fourth

win in their last five games.

The Bullets pulled within

two points twice, including

99-97 with 2:52 to play after

Rex Chapman made a three-

pointer. Washington had a

chance to tie but Webber

missed a jumper with 2:00 to

play.

Rod Strickland added 26

points, making 16-of-17 from

the foul line for Portland,

which outrebounded the Bul-

lets, 47-38.

The court on Wednesday

heard defence pleas on be-

half of Tapie and five others

accused of rigging a 1993

league game between

Marseille and Valenciennes.

A self-made millionaire,

Tapie was declared persona

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Ekeus due in Baghdad amid fresh U.S. charges

BAGHDAD (AP) — Rolf Ekeus, head of the U.N. commission charged with destroying Iraq's non-conventional weapons, is due here Friday for talks with senior government officials.

Goran Wallen, director of the United Nations' monitoring centre in Baghdad, told the Associated Press Wednesday that Mr. Ekeus would meet Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz and other ministers during his four-day visit.

"It's of special interest now because he is going to deliver to the Security Council a new six-month report on April 10," Mr. Wallen said.

The contents of the report on the U.N. weapons monitoring programme could play a role in determining whether the Security Council decides to continue the crippling oil embargo against Iraq.

Oil and trade sanctions were imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 687, enacted at the time of the 1991 Gulf war ceasefire, calls for the dismantling of Iraq's nuclear, missile, chemical and biological warfare programme before oil sales, Iraq's economic mainstay, can be resumed.

Iraq insists it has complied with all the ceasefire resolutions and wants the sanctions lifted.

But Mr. Ekeus last month told the Security Council that Iraq has not accounted for 22 tonnes of material that could be used to cultivate bacteria for germ warfare.

The United States claims Iraq has rebuilt a missile research facility and parts of a complex that had been used to produce chemical weapons.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, told a Senate committee Tuesday that if sanctions were lifted, Baghdad would immediately

restart its weapons programme and could build a nuclear device in five to seven years.

She led the campaign in the Security Council March 13 to renew the sanctions for another 60 days.

Citing U.S. intelligence estimates, Ms. Albright told the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee that Iraq continues to hide equipment and materials belonging to its programmes for weapons of mass destruction.

She said Iraq continues to "rebuild its infrastructure of mass destruction." Ms. Albright made public for the first time reconnaissance photos showing the Al Kindi missile research and development facility that has been rebuilt since it was badly damaged in the Gulf war.

The photos, first presented to the U.N. Security Council, also showed the Habbaniyah II Complex which Ms. Albright said used to produce chemical weapons prior to that war. They showed the Iraqis had rebuilt the main production building and chlorine plant and added phenol and ferric chloride production lines.

"We believe that if the oil embargo is lifted... Baghdad could well order the departure of U.N. inspectors," Ms. Albright told the senators.

She cited the international cooperation needed to secure the embargo in arguing against a bill that would demand reimbursement from the world body for U.S. military assistance to peacekeeping and monitoring operations such as the one in Iraq.

"It would invite chaos if other countries were to mimic our unilateral actions," she said.

"Under those circumstances Iraq would be able to begin producing Scud missiles within one year, rebuild its biological weapons program."

ramme in less than a year and its chemical warfare programme in two-to-three years," she said. "In five to seven years, it could build a nuclear device."

Mr. Wallen, a retired Swedish admiral, declined to discuss specific allegations against Iraq, saying the issues were up to Mr. Ekeus to resolve.

The Swedish diplomat heads the U.N. Special Commission which is responsible for supervising the destruction of Iraqi weapons and setting up a long-term monitoring system.

The talks also discussed how "to preserve security and stability in the Gulf as well as the efforts deployed by the United States to restart Israeli-Arab negotiations," the agency said.

Mr. Gore was expected to "preserve security and stability in the Gulf as well as the efforts deployed by the United States to restart Israeli-Arab negotiations," the agency said.

He said that plans were being prepared at U.N. headquarters in New York for yet another monitoring programme to be put in place after the sanctions are lifted. It will keep track of imports of civilian materials that could be diverted for military use.

He declined to speculate on when the sanctions against Iraq would be lifted.

Asked if the U.N. weapons programme had been affected by the detention last week by Iraq of two Americans who strayed across the border from Kuwait or by Turkey's offensive this week against Kurds in northern Iraq, he said: "I don't think any of these events have any influence on the monitoring system."

The U.N. Special Commission has sent at least 110 inspection teams into Iraq to check on its compliance with the ceasefire resolutions since April 1991. None is currently in the country, Mr. Wallen said.

"It would invite chaos if other countries were to mimic our unilateral actions," she said.

"Under those circumstances Iraq would be able to begin producing Scud missiles within one year, rebuild its biological weapons program."

Bahrain starts trials of suspects in December riots

BAHRAIN (AP) — Twelve Bahrainis went before the state security court Wednesday on charges of sabotage as authorities began prosecuting people rounded up during riots that erupted last December and have splattered periodically since then.

The prosecutor-general's office said in a statement carried by the official Gulf News Agency that indictments for "rioting, sabotage and violence" have been completed.

But the statement gave no indication of how many people have been indicted for the December rioting, the worst civil unrest in the island in a decade.

The statement said a number of "other cases" were still being investigated and should be completed "in the near future."

This was an apparent reference to cases where the state prosecution may allege there was foreign involvement in a plot to destabilise the state, a

charge that has been made by the Bahrain leadership.

The statement said lawyers and relatives were present at the hearings, and that the defendants, who had made full confessions, were assured of all their legal rights.

It said these confessions have led authorities to the "plotters and inciters to these crimes."

The continued detention of scores of people rounded up during the December riots has triggered fresh street clashes, mainly in Bahrain's Shiite Muslim suburbs, in recent weeks.

The unrest has come nowhere near the scale of the December trouble, although vehicles have been damaged.

A policeman was killed and two wounded when their car was bombed with homemade gasoline bombs March 7.

Another policeman, a Pakistani, was beaten to death by protesters in December.

15 dead in clash between rival groups in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — A clash between rival Islamic extremist groups in the Ain Defla region west of Algiers left 15 people dead, the Algerian daily *Le Matin* reported Wednesday.

Fighting broke out between members of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) in the region 150 kilometres from the capital.

The reported battle would be the first between the GIA and the AIS since the former threatened to attack members of other armed Islamic groups, claiming it alone carried the "banner of the jihad (holy war)" in Algeria.

Its communiqué, published Tuesday in the London-based Arabic-language daily *Al Hayat*, said it was "pursuing its brotherly measures in order to crush those who step out of line." The statement was signed by the GIA's presumed leader, Abou Abdul Ahmene Amine.

Last year security forces and the media reported a number of clashes between rival groups in what the papers called "the war of the chiefs."

A GIA leader, Mouloud Hattab, was reportedly killed along with nine of his deputies and his wife by a rival group.

The GIA is considered the most extreme of the armed groups fighting the secular,

army-backed regime while the AIS is thought to be the armed wing of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). The Algerian civil war began after the cancellation in January 1992 of the second round of elections the FIS was poised to win.

Last week the AIS announced it was provisionally taking over leadership of the FIS, naming one of its military chiefs, Madani Merzak, national "interim emir" in the absence of FIS leaders Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, who are under house arrest.

A spokesman for Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi on Tuesday denied a report in a Saudi newspaper that Mr. Madani and Mr. Belhadj had been put back in jail after their release into house arrest last September.

In another development, seven armed men who attacked a village in the coastal Kabylie region were killed by security forces in a 12-hour operation, press reports said Wednesday.

Three other men, also armed, were taken prisoner by the forces who seized a number of weapons.

The reported said they were among a dozen men who swooped on the village of Ait Larba early Tuesday to steal hunting weapons from the inhabitants.

Lebanon seeks probe into deaths in Khamis jail

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Lebanon is seeking an international investigation into the deaths of prisoners in an Israeli-controlled jail in South Lebanon, the official National News Agency said on Wednesday.

It is part of a diplomatic campaign launched by the Foreign Ministry to make Israel "stop its savage acts against Lebanese detainees and respect human rights," the news agency said.

It said the ministry was seeking the release of hundreds of Lebanese prisoners held by Israel, compensation for them under international law and visits to them while in jail by the Red Cross and other agencies.

All Lebanese embassies have been ordered to urge the governments to whom they are accredited to make "intensive contacts with Israel and international institutions" on these issues.

Embassies have been told to urge "investigations authorised by international agreements on matters related to the deaths of prisoners in jail, especially since many are held for years illegally, without trial or legal defence, contrary to the Geneva Convention on prisoners," the agency said.

Israel and its client militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), hold 260 prisoners in a hilltop jail at Khamis in Israel's South Lebanon occupation zone, which has never been visited by outside agencies, and about 60 in Israel.

Some 14 Khamis prisoners died since 1985 and others are in danger of death through torture and medical neglect, according to a Beirut-based prisoners' support group. Some prisoners have been held for 10 years without trial, it says.

Mohammed Safa, head of the group, handed the ministry a report on Tuesday saying that according to 32 prisoners recently released from Khamis some inmates have "lifetime disabilities" as a result of their treatment.

Fifteen of the 32 had to go to hospital after their release.

Mr. Safa told Reuters he welcomed the diplomatic campaign, but he said Israel's treatment of the prisoners should be raised at the International Court of Justice at the Hague and Lebanon should complain about it to the U.N. Security Council.

Gore and Qaboos meet in Muscat

MUSCAT (Agencies) —

U.S. Vice-President Al Gore met here Wednesday with Sultan Qaboos of Oman to discuss U.N. sanctions against Iraq and security in the Gulf, the Omani News Agency (ONA) said.

They viewed "the sanctions imposed on Iraq, means to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people and the need for Iraq to comply with all U.N. Security Council resolutions" linked to the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, it said.

The talks also discussed how "to preserve security and stability in the Gulf as well as the efforts deployed by the United States to restart Israeli-Arab negotiations," the agency said.

Mr. Gore was expected to "preserve security and stability in the Gulf as well as the efforts deployed by the United States to restart Israeli-Arab negotiations," the agency said.

He said that plans were being prepared at U.N. headquarters in New York for yet another monitoring programme to be put in place after the sanctions are lifted. It will keep track of imports of civilian materials that could be diverted for military use.

He declined to speculate on when the sanctions against Iraq would be lifted.

Asked if the U.N. weapons programme had been affected by the detention last week by Iraq of two Americans who strayed across the border from Kuwait or by Turkey's offensive this week against Kurds in northern Iraq, he said: "I don't think any of these events have any influence on the monitoring system."

The biological weapons programme, he said, was in "an interim phase." He did not give any details.

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Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Vice-President Al Gore and his wife upon their departure from Amman (Petra photo)

standing of Islam.

On Thursday, Mr. Gore will leave for Israel.

Mr. Gore arrived here from Amman at the conclusion of a two-day visit to Jordan during which he held talks with His Majesty King Hussein on issues of common interest, particularly

release of Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the 600 cruise passengers.

They eventually surrendered to Egyptian authorities, but a plane laid on to take them to safety in Tunis was intercepted by United States fighters and forced to land in Italy, where the guerrillas were arrested.

In its published findings, the high court rejected as totally without credibility key evidence given at Mr. Kaspar's trial by Ahmad Boumernesh, an aide to the Syrian for 10 years.

Mr. Boumernesh told the court he was with Mr. Kaspar in Tunis when he delivered weapons intended for use in the hijack. He claimed he had received death threats from Mr. Kaspar to prevent him coming to the trial.

The verdict said the court believed Mr. Boumernesh had acted out of vengeance and his evidence was full of contradictions.

It also noted that some evidence against Mr. Kaspar had been illicitly obtained by robbery.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwait seeks attack on moneylaundering

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's central bank governor in remarks published on Wednesday urged regulators of Arab banks to cooperate in fighting money laundering. The governor, Sheikh Salem Abdul Azziz Al Sabah, said monetary institutions should try to trace laundered capital and hold accountable those responsible for such crimes, Al Talea weekly newspaper quoted him as saying. "Sheikh Salem underlined the need to unify the regulations that fight money laundering in the Arab region," the paper said.

The central bank has instructed Kuwaiti banks to improve internal monitoring systems and informed them of the best ways to fight money laundering. Sheikh Salem said: "We stressed the necessity to unify regulations against moneylaundering in the Arab region and urged monetary institutions to follow up laundered capital and hold accountable those responsible for such crimes." Al Talea said.

It is part of a diplomatic campaign launched by the Foreign Ministry to make Israel "stop its savage acts against Lebanese detainees and respect human rights," the news agency said.

It said the ministry was seeking the release of hundreds